

THE
S Y L P H;
A
N O V E L.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

" Ye Sylphs and Sylphids, to your chief give ear,
" Fays, Fairies, Genii, Elves, and Demons, hear!
" Ye know the spheres, and various tasks assign'd
" By laws eternal to th' ærial kind:
" Some in the fields of purest æther play,
" And bask, and whiten, in the blaze of day;
" Some guide the course of wand'ring orbs on high,
" Or roll the planets thro' the boundless sky:
" Our humbler province is to tend the Fair,
" Not a less pleasing, nor less glorious care."

POPE'S Rape of the Lock.

V O L. II.



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THE SYLPH.

LETTER XXVI.

To Miss GRENVILLE.

I FEEL easier in my mind, my dearest Louisa, since I have established a sort of correspondence with the Sylph. I can now, when any intricate circumstance arises, which your distance may disable you from being serviceable in, have an almost immediate assistance in, or at least the concurrence of—my Sylph, my guardian angel!

In a letter I received from him the other day, he told me, “a time might

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“come

“ come when he should lose his influence
 “ over me ; however remote the period,
 “ as there was a possibility of his living
 “ to see it, the *idea* filled his mind with
 “ sorrow. The only method his skill
 “ could divine, of still possessing the pri-
 “ vilege of superintending my concerns,
 “ would be to have some pledge from
 “ me. He flattered himself I should not
 “ scruple to indulge this only weakness
 “ of *humanity* he discovered, since I
 “ might rest assured he had it neither in
 “ his will or inclination to make an ill
 “ use of my condescension.” The rest
 of the letter contained advice as usual.
 I only made this extract to tell you my
 determination on this head. I think to
 send a little locket with my hair in it.
 The *design* I have formed in my own
 mind, and, when it is compleated, will
 describe it to you.

* * * *

I have seriously reflected on what I had
 written to you in my last concerning
 Miss Finch and (let me not practise dis-
 ingenuity to my beloved sister) the Baron
 Ton-hausen. Miss Finch called on me
 yesterday

yesterday morning — she brought her work. “ I am come,” said she, “ to spend some hours with you.” “ I wish,” returned I, “ you would enlarge your plan, and make it the whole day.”

“ With all my heart,” she replied, “ if you are to be alone ; for I wish to have a good deal of chat with you ; and hope we shall have no male impertinents break-in upon our little female *tête-à-tête*.” I knew Sir William was out for the day, and gave orders I should not be at home to any one.

As soon as we were quite by ourselves, “ Lord !” said she, “ I was monstrously flurried coming hither, for I met Montague in the Park, and could hardly get clear of him—I was fearful he would follow me here.” As she first mentioned him, I thought it gave me a kind of right to ask her some questions concerning that gentleman, and the occasion of her rupture with him. She answered me very candidly—“ To tell you the truth, my dear Lady Stanley, it is but lately I had much idea that it

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“ was necessary to love one’s husband, in
 “ order to be happy in marriage.”
 “ You astonish me,” I cried. “ Nay,
 “ but hear me. Reflect how we young
 “ women, who are born in the air of the
 “ court, are bred. Our heads filled with
 “ nothing but pleasure—let the means
 “ of procuring it be, almost, what you
 “ will. We marry—but without any
 “ notion of its being an union for life—
 “ only a few years; and then we make
 “ a second choice. But I have lately
 “ thought otherwise; and in consequence
 “ of these my more serious reflections,
 “ am convinced Colonel Montague and
 “ I might make a fashionable couple,
 “ but never a happy one. I used to
 “ laugh at his gaieties, and foolishly
 “ thought myself flattered by the atten-
 “ tions of a man whom half my sex had
 “ found dangerous; but I never loved
 “ him; that I am now more convinced of
 “ than ever: and as to reforming his
 “ morals—oh! it would not be worth
 “ the pains, if the thing was possible.
 “ Let the women be ever so exem-
 “ plary, their conduct will have no in-
 “ fluence

"fluence over these professed rakes;
 "these rakes upon principle, as that ini-
 "quitous Lord Chesterfield has taught
 "our youth to be. Only look at your-
 "self, I do not mean to flatter you;
 "what effect has your mildness, your
 "thousand and ten thousand good quali-
 "ties, for I will not pretend to enume-
 "rate them, had over the mind of your
 "husband? None. On my conscience;
 "I believe it has only made him worse;
 "because he knew he never should be
 "censured by such a pattern of meek-
 "ness. And what chance should such
 "an one as I have with one of these
 "*modern* husbands? I fear me, I should
 "become a *modern* wife. I think I am
 "not vain-glorious, when I say I have
 "not a bad heart, and am ambitious of
 "emulating a good example. On these
 "considerations alone, I resolved to give
 "the Colonel his dismissal. He pre-
 "tended to be much hurt by my deter-
 "mination; but I really believe the loss
 "of my fortune his greatest disappoint-
 "ment, as, I find, he has two, if not
 "more, mistresses to console him."

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"It would hardly be fair," said I, "after your candid declaration, to call any part in question, or else I should be tempted to ask you, if you had really no other motive for your rejection of the Colonel's suit?"

"You scrutinize pretty closely," returned Miss Finch, blushing; "but I will make no concealments; I have a man in my eye, with whom, I think, the longer the union lasted, the happier I, at least, should be."

"Do I know the happy man?"

"Indeed you do; and one of some consequence too."

"It cannot be Lord Biddulph?"

"Lord Biddulph!—No, indeed!—not Lord Biddulph, I assure your Ladyship; tho' *he* has a title, but not an English one."

To you, my dear Louisa, I use no reserve. I felt a sickishness and chill all over me; but recovering instantly, or rather, I fear, desirous of appearing unaffected by what she said, I immediately rejoined—"So then, I may wish the *Baron* joy of his conquest." A faint smile,

finile, which barely concealed my anguish, accompanied my speech.

“ Why should I be ashamed of saying
“ I think the Baron the most amiable
“ man in the world? tho’ it is but lately
“ I have allowed his superior merit the
“ preference; indeed, I did not know so
“ much of him as within these few weeks
“ I have had opportunity.”

“ He is certainly very amiable,” said
I. “ But don’t you think it very close?”
(I felt ill.) “ I believe I must open the
“ window for a little air. Pursue your
“ panegyric, my dear Miss Finch. I
“ was rather overcome by the warmth of
“ the day; I am better now—pray pro-
“ ceed.”

“ Well then, it is not because he is
“ handsome that I give him this prefe-
“ rence; for I do not know whether
“ Montague has not a finer person.
“ Observe, I make this a doubt, for I
“ think those marks of the small-pox
“ give an additional expression to his
“ features. What say you?”

“ I am no competent judge,” I an-
swered, “ but, in my opinion, those

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“ who do most justice to Baron Ton-
 “ haufen, will forget, or overlook, the
 “ graces of his person, in the contem-
 “ plation of the more estimable, be-
 “ cause more permanent, beauties of his
 “ mind.”

“ What an elegant panegyrist you
 “ are ! In three words you have com-
 “ prized his eulogium, which I should
 “ have spent hours about, and not so
 “ compleated at last. But the opportu-
 “ nity I hinted at having had of late, of
 “ discovering more of the Baron’s cha-
 “ racter, is this: I was one day walking
 “ in the Park with some ladies ; the
 “ Baron joined us ; a well-looking old
 “ man, but meanly dressed, met us ; he
 “ fixed his eyes on Ton-haufen ; he
 “ started, then, clasping his hands toge-
 “ ther, exclaimed with eagerness, ‘ It
 “ is, it must be he ! O, Sir ! O, thou
 “ best of men !’ ‘ My good friend,’ said
 “ the Baron, while his face was crim-
 “ soned over, ‘ my good friend, I am
 “ glad to see you in health, but be more
 “ moderate.’ I never before thought him
 “ handsome ; but such a look of bene-
 “ volence

"volence accompanied his soft accents,
 "that I fancied him something more
 "than mortal. 'Pardon my too lively
 "expressions,' the old man answered,
 "but gratitude—oh for such benefits!
 "you, Sir, may, and have a right to
 "command my lips; but my eyes—
 "my eyes will bear testimony.' His
 "voice was now almost choaked with
 "sobs, and the tears flowed plentifully.
 "I was extremely moved at this scene,
 "and had likewise a little female curio-
 "sity excited to develope this mystery..
 "I saw the Baron wished to conceal his
 "own and the old man's emotions, so
 "walked a little aside with him. I took
 "that opportunity of whispering my
 "servant to find out, if possible, where
 "this man came from, and discover the
 "state of this adventure. The ladies
 "and myself naturally were chatting on
 "this subject, when the Baron rejoined:
 "our party. 'Poor fellow,' said he,
 "he is so full of gratitude for my hav-
 "ing rendered a slight piece of service to
 "his family, and fancies he owes every
 "blessing in life to me, for having placed!

“ two or three of his children out in the
“ world.’ We were unanimous in prais-
“ ing the generosity of the Baron, and
“ were making some hard reflections on
“ the infrequency of such examples
“ among the affluent, when Montague
“ came up ; he begged to know on
“ whom we were so severe ; I told him
“ in three words—and pointed to the
“ object of the Baron’s bounty. He
“ looked a little chagrined, which I at-
“ tributed to my commendations of this
“ late instance of worth, as, I believe, I
“ expressed myself with that generous
“ warmth which a benevolent action ex-
“ cites in a breast capable of feeling,
“ and wishing to emulate, such patterns.
“ After my return home, my servant
“ told me he had followed the old man
“ to his lodgings, which were in an ob-
“ scure part of the town, where he saw
“ him received by a woman nearly his
“ own age, a beautiful girl of eighteen,
“ and two little boys. James, who is
“ really an *adroit* fellow, farther said,
“ that, by way of introduction, he told
“ them to whom he was servant ; that
“ his

"his lady was attached to their interest
 "from something the Baron had men-
 "tioned concerning them, and had, in
 "earnest of her future intentions, sent
 "them a half-guinea. At the name of
 "the Baron, the old folks lifted up their
 "hands and blessed him; the girl
 "blushed, and cast down her eyes; and,
 "said James, 'I thought, my lady, she
 "seemed to pray for him with greater
 "fervour than the rest.' 'He is the no-
 "blest of men!' echoed the old pair.
 "He is indeed!' sighed the young girl.
 "My heart, my lady, ran over at my
 "eyes to see the thankfulness of these
 "poor people. They begged me to make
 "their grateful acknowledgments to your
 "ladyship for your bounty, and hoped
 "the worthy Baron would convince you
 "it was not thrown away on base or for-
 "getful folks.' James was not farther
 "inquisitive about their affairs, judging,
 "very properly, that I should chuse to
 "make some inquiries myself.

"The next day I happened to meet the
 "Baron at your house. I hinted to him
 "how much my curiosity had been

"excited by the adventure in the Park.
 "He made very light of it, saying, his
 "services were only common ones; but
 "that the object having had a tolerable
 "education, his expressions were rather
 "adapted to his own feelings than to the
 "merit of the benefit. Ah! Baron,
 "I cried, there is more in this affair
 "than you think proper to communicate.
 "I shall not cease persecuting you till
 "you let me a little more into it. I feel
 "myself interested, and you must oblige
 "me with a recital of the circumstances;
 "for which purpose I will set you down
 "in my *vis-à-vis*. 'Are you not aware,
 "my dear Miss Finch, of the pain you
 "will put me to in resounding my own
 "praise?—What can be more perplex-
 "ing to a modest man?' 'A truce with
 "your modesty in this instance, I re-
 "plied; be *just* to yourself, and *gene-*
 "*rously indulgent* to me.' He bowed,
 "and promised to gratify my desire.
 "When we were seated, 'I will now
 "obey you, Madam,' said the Baron.
 "A young fellow, who was the lover of
 "the daughter to the old man you saw
 "yesterday,

" yesterday, was inveigled by some sol-
 " diers to enlist in Colonel Montague's
 " regiment. The present times are so cri-
 " tical, that the idea of a soldier's life is
 " full of terror in the breast of a tender
 " female. Nancy Johnson was in a state
 " of distraction, which the consciousness
 " of her being rather too severe in a late
 " dispute with her lover served to
 " heighten, as she fancied herself the
 " cause of his resolution. Being a fine
 " young man of six feet, he was too eli-
 " gible an object for the Colonel to wish
 " to part from. Great intercession, how-
 " ever, was made, but to no effect, for
 " he was ordered to join the regiment.
 " You must conceive the distress of the
 " whole family; the poor girl broken-
 " hearted; her parents hanging over her
 " in anguish, and, ardent to restore the
 " peace of mind of their darling, forming
 " the determination of coming up to town
 " to solicit his discharge from the Colonel.
 " By accident I became acquainted with
 " their distressed situation, and, from my
 " intimacy with Montague, procured
 " them the blessing they sought for. I
 " have

“ have provided him with a small place,
“ and made a trifling addition to her por-
“ tion. They are shortly to be married,
“ and of course, I hope, happy. And
“ now, madam,” he continued, “ I have
“ acquitted myself of my engagement to
“ you.” I thanked him for his recital,
“ and said, ‘ I doubted not his pleasure
“ was near as great as theirs ; for to a
“ mind like his, a benevolent action must
“ carry a great reward with it.’ ‘ Hap-
“ piness and pleasure,’ he answered,
“ are both comparative in some degree ;
“ and to feel them in their most exquisite
“ sense, must be after having been de-
“ prived of them for a long time—we
“ see ourselves possessed of them when
“ hope had forsaken us. When the hap-
“ piness of man depends on relative ob-
“ jects, he will be frequently liable to
“ disappointment. I have found it so.
“ I have seen every prop, on which I had
“ built my schemes of felicity, sink one
“ after the other ; no other resource was
“ then left, but to endeavour to form
“ that happiness in others, which fate
“ had for ever prevented my enjoying ;
“ and

“ and when I succeed, I feel a pleasure
 “ which for a moment prevents obtruding
 “ thoughts from rankling in my bosom.
 “ But I ask your pardon—I am too se-
 “ rious—tho’ my *tête-à-têtes* with the la-
 “ dies are usually so.’ I told him, such
 “ reflections as his conversation gave rise
 “ to, excited more heart-felt pleasure
 “ than the broadest mirth could e’er be-
 “ stow; that *I* too was serious, and I
 “ hoped should be a better woman as
 “ long as I lived, from the resolution I
 “ had formed of attending, for the fu-
 “ ture, to the happiness of others more
 “ than I had done. Here our conversa-
 “ tion ended, for we arrived at his house.
 “ I went home full of the idea of the
 “ Baron and his recital; which, tho’ I
 “ gave him credit for, I did not impli-
 “ citly believe, at least as to circum-
 “ stance, tho’ I might to substance. I
 “ was kept waking the whole night, in
 “ comparing the several parts of the Ba-
 “ ron’s and James’s accounts. In short,
 “ the more I ruminated, the more I was
 “ convinced there was more in it than
 “ the Baron had revealed; and Mon-
 “ tague

"tague being an actor in the play, did
 "not a little contribute to my desire of
 "peeping behind the curtain, and having
 "the whole *drama* before me. Accor-
 "dingly, as soon as I had breakfasted,
 "I ordered my carriage, and took James
 "for my guide. When we came to the
 "end of the street, I got out, and away
 "I tramped to Johnson's lodgings. I
 "made James go up first, and apprize
 "them of my coming; and, out of the
 "goodness of his heart, in order to re-
 "lieve their minds from the perplexity
 "which inferiority always excites, James
 "told them, I was the best lady in the
 "world, and might, for charity, pass
 "for the Baron's sister. I heard this as I
 "ascended the staircase. But, when I
 "entered, I was really struck with the
 "figure of the young girl. Divested
 "of all ornament—without the aid of
 "dress, or any external advantage, I
 "think I never beheld a more beautiful
 "object. I apologized for the abrupt-
 "ness of my appearance amongst them,
 "but added, I doubted not, as a friend
 "of the Baron's and an encourager of
 "merit,

“ merit, I should not be unwelcome. I
 “ begged them to go on with their several
 “ employments. They received me
 “ with that kind of embarrassment which
 “ is usual with people circumstanced as
 “ they are, who fancy themselves under
 “ obligations to the affluent for treating
 “ them with common civility. That they
 “ might recover their spirits, I addressed
 “ myself to the two little boys, and
 “ emptied my pockets to amuse them.
 “ I told the good old pair what the Baron
 “ had related to me ; but fairly
 “ added, I did not believe he had told
 “ me all the truth, which I attributed to
 “ his delicacy. ‘ Oh !’ said the young
 “ girl, ‘ with the best and most noble of
 “ minds, the Baron possesses the greatest
 “ delicacy ; but I need not tell you so ;
 “ you, madam, I doubt not, are ac-
 “ quainted with his excellencies ; and may
 “ he, in you, receive his earthly re-
 “ ward for the good he has done to us !
 “ Oh, madam ! he has saved me, both
 “ soul and body ; but for him, I had
 “ been the most undone of all creatures.
 “ Sure he was our better angel, sent
 “ down

“down to stand between us and destruction.”

“ ‘Wonder not, madam,’ said the father, ‘at the lively expressions of my child; gratitude is the best master of eloquence; she feels, madam—we all feel the force of the advantages we derive from that worthy man. Good God! what had been our situation at this moment, had we not owed our deliverance to the Baron!’ ‘I am not, said I, entirely acquainted with the whole of your story; the Baron, I am certain, concealed great part; but I should be happy to hear the particulars.’

“The old man assured me he had a pleasure in reciting a tale which reflected so much honour on the Baron; ‘and let me,’ said he, ‘in the pride of my heart, let me add, no disgrace on me or mine; for, madam, poverty, in the eye of the right-judging, is no disgrace. Heaven is my witness, I never repined at my lowly station, till by that I was deprived of the means of rescuing my beloved

" loved family from their distress. But
 " what would riches have availed me,
 " had the evil befallen me from which
 " that godlike man extricated us? Oh !
 " madam, the wealth of worlds could
 " not have conveyed one ray of comfort
 " to my heart, if I could not have looked
 " all round my family, and said, tho' we
 " are poor, we are virtuous, my chil-
 " dren.

" It would be impertinent to trouble
 " you, madam, with a prolix account of
 " my parentage and family. I was once
 " master of a little charity-school, but
 " by unavoidable misfortunes I lost it.
 " My eldest daughter, who sits there,
 " was tenderly beloved by a young man
 " in our village, whose virtues would
 " have reflected honour on the most ele-
 " vated character. She did ample justice
 " to his merit. We looked forward
 " to the *happy* hour that was to render
 " our child so, and had formed a thou-
 " sand little schemes of rational delight,
 " to enliven our evening of life ; in one
 " short moment the sun of our joy was
 " overcast, and promised to set in lasting
 " night.

" night. On a fatal day, my Nancy was
 " seen by a gentleman in the army, who
 " was down on a visit to a neighbouring
 " squire, my landlord; her figure at-
 " tracted his notice, and he followed
 " her to our peaceful dwelling. Her
 " mother and I were absent with a sick
 " relation, and her protector was out at
 " work with a farmer at some distance.
 " He obtruded himself into our house,
 " and begged a draught of ale; my
 " daughter, whose innocence suspected
 " no ill, freely gave him a mug, of
 " which he just sipped; then, putting it
 " down, swore he would next taste the
 " nectar of her lips. She repelled his
 " boldness with all her strength, which,
 " however, would have availed her but
 " little, had not our next-door neigh-
 " bour, seeing a fine looking man follow
 " her in, harboured a suspicion that all
 " was not right, and took an opportunity
 " of coming in to borrow something.
 " Nancy was happy to see her, and
 " begged her to stay till our return, pre-
 " tending she could not procure her
 " what she wanted till then. Finding
 " himself

" himself disappointed, Colonel Monta-
 " gue (I suppose, madam, you know him),
 " went away, when Nancy informed
 " our neighbour of his proceedings.
 " She had hardly recovered herself from
 " her perturbation when we came home.
 " I felt myself exceedingly alarmed at
 " her account; more particularly as I
 " learnt the Colonel was a man of in-
 " trigue, and proposed staying some
 " time in the country. I resolved never
 " to leave my daughter at home by her-
 " self, or suffer her to go out without
 " her intended husband. But the vigi-
 " lance of a fond father was too easily
 " eluded by the subtilties of an enter-
 " prizing man, who spared neither time
 " nor money to compass his illaudable
 " schemes. By presents he corrupted
 " *that* neighbour, whose timely inter-
 " position had preserved my child in-
 " violate. From the friendship she had
 " expressed for us, we placed the utmost
 " confidence in her, and, next to our-
 " selves, intrusted her with the future
 " welfare of our daughter. When the
 " out-posts are corrupted, what *fort* can
 " remain

“ remain unendangered? It is, I believe,
“ a received opinion, that more women
“ are seduced from the path of virtue by
“ their own sex, than by ours. Whe-
“ ther it is, that the unlimited faith they
“ are apt to put in their own sex weakens
“ the barriers of virtue, and renders
“ them less powerful against the attacks
“ of the men, or that, suspecting no
“ sinister view, they throw off their
“ guard; it is certain that an artful
“ and vicious woman is infinitely a more
“ to be dreaded companion, than the
“ most abandoned libertine. This false
“ friend used from time to time to admi-
“ nister the poison of flattery to the
“ tender unsuspecting daughter of in-
“ nocence. What female is free from
“ the seeds of vanity? And unfortu-
“ nately, this bad woman was but too
“ well versed in this destructive art. She
“ continually was introducing instances
“ of handsome girls who had made their
“ fortunes merely from that circumstance.
“ That, to be sure, the young man, her
“ sweetheart, had merit; but what a
“ pity a person like her's should be lost
“ to

"to the world! That she believed the
 "Colonel to be too much a man of ho-
 "nour to seduce a young woman, though
 "he might like to divert himself with
 "them. What a fine opportunity it
 "would be to raise her family, like
 "*Pamela Andrews*; and accordingly
 "placed in the hands of my child those
 "pernicious volumes. Ah! madam,
 "what wonder such artifices should pre-
 "vail over the ignorant mind of a young
 "rustic! Alas! they sunk too deep.
 "Nancy first learnt to disrelish the ho-
 "nest, artless effusions of her first lover's
 "heart. His language was insipid, after
 "the luscious speeches, and ardent but
 "dishonourable warmth of Mr. B— in
 "the books before-mentioned. Taught
 "to despise simplicity, she was easily led to
 "suffer the Colonel to plead for pardon
 "for his late boldness. My poor girl's
 "head was now completely turned, to
 "see such an accomplished man kneeling
 "at her feet suing for forgiveness, and
 "using the most refined expressions; and
 "elevating her to a Goddess, that he
 "might debase her to the lowest dregs
 "of

“ of human kind. Oh ! madam, what
“ have not such wretches to answer for !
“ The Colonel’s professions, however,
“ at present, were all within the bounds
“ of honour. A man never scruples to
“ make engagements which he never
“ purposes to fulfil, and which he takes
“ care no one shall ever be able to claim.
“ He was very profuse of promises,
“ judging it the most likely method of tri-
“ umphing over her virtue by appearing
“ to respect it. Things were proceeding
“ thus ; when, finding the Colonel’s con-
“ tinued stay in our neighbourhood, I
“ became anxious to conclude my daugh-
“ ter’s union, hoping, that, when he
“ should see her married, he would en-
“ tirely lay his schemes aside ; for, by
“ his hovering about our village, I
“ could not remain satisfied, or prevent
“ disagreeable apprehensions arising.
“ My daughter was too artless to frame
“ any excuse to protract her wedding,
“ and equally so, not to discover, by
“ her confusion, that her sentiments were
“ changed. My intended son-in-law
“ saw too clearly that *change* ; perhaps
“ he

"he had heard more than I had. He
 "made rather a too sharp observation on
 "the alteration in his mistress's features.
 "Duty and respect kept her silent to
 "me, but to him she made an acrimo-
 "nious reply. He had been that day
 "at market, and had taken a too free
 "draught of ale. His spirits had been
 "elevated by my information, that I
 "would that evening fix his wedding-
 "day. The damp on my daughter's
 "brow had therefore a greater effect
 "on him. He could not brook her
 "reply, and his answer to it was a
 "sarcastic reflection on those women
 "who were undone by the *red-coats*.
 "This touched too nearly; and, after
 "darting a look of the most ineffable
 "contempt on him, Nancy declared,
 "whatever might be the consequence,
 "she would never give her hand to a
 "man who had dared to treat her on
 "the eve of her marriage with such un-
 "exampled insolence; so saying, she
 "left the room. I was sorry matters
 "had gone so far, and wished to re-
 "concile the pair, but both were too
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"haughty to yield to the intercessions
 "I made; and he left us with a fixed
 "resolution of making her repent, as
 "he said. As is too common in such
 "cases, the public-house seemed the
 "properest asylum for the disappointed
 "lover. He there met with a recruiting
 "serjeant of the Colonel's, who, we since
 "find, was sent on purpose to our
 "village, to get Nancy's future husband
 "out of the way. The bait unhappily
 "took, and before morning he was
 "enlisted in the king's service. His
 "father and mother, half distracted,
 "ran to our house, to learn the cause of
 "this rash action in their son. Nancy,
 "whose virtuous attachment to her
 "former lover had only been lulled to
 "sleep, now felt it rouse with re-
 "doubled violence. She pictured to
 "herself the dangers he was now going
 "to encounter, and accused herself with
 "being the cause. Judging of the in-
 "fluence she had over the Colonel, she
 "flew into his presence; she begged,
 "she conjured him, to give the pre-
 "cipitate young soldier his discharge.

"He

" He told her, ' he could freely grant any
 " thing to her petition, but that it was
 " too much his interest to remove the
 " only obstacle to his happiness out of
 " the way, for him to be able to com-
 " ply with her request.' ' However,'
 " continued he, taking her hand,
 " ' my Nancy has it in her power to
 " preserve the young man.' ' Oh!'
 " cried she, ' how freely would I exert
 " that power!' ' Be mine this moment,'
 " said he, ' and I will promise on my
 " honour to discharge him.' ' By that
 " sacred word,' said Nancy, ' I beg you,
 " sir, to reflect on the cruelty of your
 " conduct to me! what generous pro-
 " fessions you have made voluntarily to
 " me! how sincerely have you promised
 " me your friendship! and does all this
 " end in a design to render me the most
 " criminal of beings?' ' My angel,'
 " cried the Colonel, throwing his arms
 " round her waist, and pressing her hand
 " to his lips, ' give not so harsh a name
 " to my intentions. No disgrace shall
 " befall you. You are a sensible girl;
 " and I need not, I am sure, tell you,
 " that,

“that, circumstanced as *I* am in life, it
“would be utterly impossible to marry
“you. I adore you; you know it; do
“not then play the sex upon me,
“and treat me with rigour, because I
“have candidly confessed I cannot live
“without you. Consent to bestow on
“me the possession of your charming
“person, and I will hide your lovely
“blushes in my fond bosom; while you
“shall whisper to my enraptured ear,
“that I shall still have the delightful
“privilege of an husband, and Will
“Parker shall bear the name. This
“little delicious private treaty shall be
“known only to ourselves. Speak, my
“angel, or rather let me read your wil-
“lingness in your lovely eyes.’ ‘If I
“have been silent, sir,’ said my poor
“girl, ‘believe me, it is the horror
“which I feel at your proposal, which
“struck me dumb. But, thus called
“upon, let me say, I bless Heaven, for
“having allowed me to see your cloven-
“foot, while yet I can be out of its reach.
“You may wound me to the soul, and
“(no longer able to conceal her tears)
“you

" you have most sorely wounded me
 " through the side of William; but I
 " will never consent to enlarge him at
 " the price of my honour. We are poor
 " people. He has not had the advantages
 " of education as you have had; but,
 " lowly as his mind is, I am convinced
 " he would first die, before I should suffer
 " for his sake. Permit me, sir, to
 " leave you, deeply affected with the
 " disappointments I have sustained; and
 " more so, that in part I have brought
 " them on myself.' Luckily at this
 " moment a servant came in with a
 " letter. ' You are now engaged, sir,'
 " she added, striving to hide her distress
 " from the man. ' Stay, young woman,'
 " said the Colonel, ' I have something
 " more to say to you on this head.' ' I
 " thank you, sir,' said she, curtsying,
 " ' but I will take the liberty of sending
 " my father to hear what further you
 " may have to say on this subject.' He
 " endeavoured to detain her, but she
 " took this opportunity of escaping.
 " On her return, she threw her arms
 " round her mother's neck, unable to
 " speak

“ speak for sobs. Good God! what
“ were our feelings on seeing her
“ distress! dying to hear, yet dreading
“ to enquire. My wife folded her
“ speechless child to her bosom, and
“ in all the agony of despair besought
“ her to explain this mournful silence.
“ Nancy slid from her mother’s incircling
“ arms, and sunk upon her knees,
“ hiding her face in her lap: at last
“ sobbed out, ‘ she was undone for ever;
“ her William would be hurried away,
“ and the Colonel was the basest of men.’
“ These broken sentences served but to
“ add to our distraction. We urged a
“ full account; but it was a long time
“ before we could learn the whole par-
“ ticulars. The poor girl now made a
“ full recital of all her folly, in having
“ listened so long to the artful addresses
“ of Colonel Montague, and the no
“ less artful persuasions of our perfidious
“ neighbour; and concluded, by im-
“ ploring our forgiveness. It would
“ have been the height of cruelty, to
“ have added to the already deeply
“ wounded Nancy. We assured her of
“ our

"our pardon, and spoke all the com-
 "fortable things we could devise. She
 "grew tolerably calm, and we talked
 "composedly of applying to some
 "persons whom we hoped might assist
 "us. Just at this juncture, a confused
 "noise made us run to the door, when
 "we beheld some soldiers marching, and
 "dragging with them the unfortunate
 "William loaded with irons, and hand-
 "cuffed. On my hastily demanding
 "why he was thus treated like a felon,
 "the serjeant answered, he had been
 "detected in an attempt to desert;
 "but that he would be tried to-morrow,
 "and might escape with five hundred
 "lashes; but, if he did not mend his
 "manners for the future, he would be
 "shot, as all such cowardly dogs ought
 "to be; and added, they were on the
 "march to the regiment. Figure to
 "yourself, madam, what was now the
 "situation of poor Nancy. Imagination
 "can hardly picture so distressed an
 "object. A heavy stupor seemed to
 "take intire possession of all her fa-
 "culties. Unless strongly urged, she

“ never opened her lips, and then only
 “ to breathe out the most heart-piercing
 “ complaints. Towards the morning,
 “ she appeared inclinable to doze ; and
 “ her mother left her bed-side, and went
 “ to her own. When we rose, my
 “ wife’s first business was to go and see
 “ how her child fared ; but what was
 “ her grief and astonishment, to find
 “ the bed cold, and her darling fled ! A
 “ small scrap of paper, containing these
 “ few distracted words, was all the in-
 “ formation we could gain :

“ ‘ My dearest father and mother, make
 “ no inquiry after the most forlorn of all
 “ wretches. I am undeserving of your
 “ least *regard*. I fear, I have forfeited
 “ *that* of Heaven. Yet pray for me :
 “ I am myself unable, as I shall prove
 “ myself unworthy. I am in despair ;
 “ what that despair may lead to, I dare
 “ not tell : I dare hardly think. Fare-
 “ well. May my brothers and sisters
 “ repay you the tenderness which has
 “ been thrown away on A. Johnson !’
 “ My wife’s shrieks reached my affrighted
 “ ears ; I flew to her, and felt a thousand
 “ conflicting

“ conflicting passions, while I read the
 “ dreadful scroll. We ran about the yard
 “ and little field, every moment terrified
 “ with the idea of seeing our beloved
 “ child’s corpse ; for what other inter-
 “ pretation could we put on the alarming
 “ notice we had received, but that to
 “ destroy herself was her intention ? All
 “ our inquiry failed. I then formed the
 “ resolution of going up to London, as
 “ I heard the regiment was ordered to
 “ quarters near town, and *hoped* there.
 “ After a fruitless search of some days,
 “ our strength, and what little money
 “ we had collected, nearly exhausted, it
 “ pleased the mercy of heaven to raise
 “ us up a friend ; one, who, like an an-
 “ gel, bestowed every comfort upon us ;
 “ in short, all comforts in one—our dear
 “ wanderer : restored her to us pure and
 “ undefiled, and obtained us the felicity
 “ of looking forward to better days.
 “ But I will pursue my long detail with
 “ some method, and follow my poor
 “ distressed daughter thro’ all the sad
 “ variety of woe she was doomed to en-
 “ counter. She told us, that, as soon as
 C 5 “ her

“her mother had left her room, she rose
“and dressed herself, wrote the little
“melancholy note, then stole softly out
“of the house, resolving to follow the
“regiment, and to preserve her lover
“by resigning herself to the base wishes
“of the Colonel; that she had taken the
“gloomy resolution of destroying herself,
“as soon as his discharge was signed, as
“she could not support the idea of living
“in infamy. Without money, she fol-
“lowed them, at a painful distance, on
“foot, and sustained herself from the
“springs and a few berries; she arrived
“at the market-town where they were
“to take up their quarters; and the first
“news that struck her ear was, that a
“fine young fellow was just then receiv-
“ing part of five hundred lashes for de-
“sertion; her trembling limbs just bore
“her to the dreadful scene; she saw
“the back of her William streaming
“with blood; she heard his agonizing
“groans! she saw--she heard no more!
“She sunk insensible on the ground.
“The compassion of the crowd around
“her, soon, too soon, restored her to a
“sense

" sense of her distress. The object of
 " it was, at this moment, taken from the
 " halberts, and was conveying away, to
 " have such applications to his lacerated
 " back as should preserve his life to a
 " renewal of his torture. He was led
 " by the spot where my child was sup-
 " ported; he instantly knew her." " Oh!
 " Nancy," he cried, " what do I see?"
 " " A wretch," she exclaimed, " but one
 " who will do you justice. Could my
 " death have prevented this, freely would
 " I have submitted to the most painful.
 " Yes, my William, I would have died
 " to have released you from those bonds,
 " and the exquisite torture I have been
 " witness to; but the cruel Colonel is
 " deaf to intreaty; nothing but my
 " everlasting ruin can preserve you.
 " Yet you shall be preserved; and heaven
 " will, I hope, have that mercy on my
 " poor soul, which this basest of men
 " will not shew." The wretches, who had
 " the care of poor William, hurried him
 " away, nor would suffer him to speak.
 " Nancy strove to run after them, but
 " fell a second time, through weakness

“and distress of mind. Heaven sent
 “amongst the spectators that best of
 “men, the noble-minded Baron. Averse
 “to such scenes of cruel discipline, he
 “came that way by accident; struck
 “with the appearance of my frantic
 “daughter, he stopped to make some
 “inquiry. He stayed till the crowd had
 “dispersed, and then addressed himself
 “to this forlorn victim of woe. Despair
 “had rendered her wholly unreserved;
 “and she related, in few words, the un-
 “happy resolution she was obliged to
 “take, to secure her lover from a repe-
 “tition of his sufferings. ‘If I will de-
 “vote myself to infamy to Colonel
 “Montague,’ said she, ‘my dear Wil-
 “liam will be released. Hard as the
 “terms are, I cannot refuse. See, see!’
 “she screamed out, ‘how the blood runs!
 “Oh! stop thy barbarous hand!’ She
 “raved, and then fell into a fit again.
 “The good Baron intreated some peo-
 “ple, who were near, to take care of
 “her. They removed the distracted
 “creature to a house in the town, where
 “some comfortable things were given her
 “by

“ by an apothecary, which the care of
“ the Baron provided.

“ By his indefatigable industry, the
“ Baron discovered the basest collusion
“ between the Colonel and serjeant;
“ that, by the instigation of the former,
“ the latter had been tampering with
“ the young recruit, about procuring
“ his discharge for a sum of money,
“ which he being at that time unable to
“ advance, the serjeant was to connive
“ at his escape, and receive the stipulated
“ reward by instalments. This infamous
“ league was contrived to have a plea for
“ tormenting poor William, hoping, by
“ that means, to effect the ruin of
“ Nancy. The whole of this black
“ transaction being unraveled, the Baron
“ went to Colonel Montague, to whom
“ he talked in pretty severe terms. The
“ Colonel, at first, was very warm, and
“ wanted much to decide the affair, as
“ he said, in an honourable way. The
“ Baron replied, ‘ it was too *dishonourable*
“ a piece of business to be thus decided;
“ that he went on sure grounds; that
“ he would prosecute the serjeant for
“ wilful

“wilful and corrupt perjury; and how
“honourably it would sound, that the
“Colonel of the regiment had conspired
“with such a fellow to procure an innocent man so ignominious a punishment.
“As this was not an affair of common
“gallantry, the Colonel was fearful of
“the exposure of it; therefore, to hush
“it up, signed the discharge, remitted
“the remaining infliction of discipline,
“and gave a note of two hundred pounds
“for the young people to begin the
“world with. The Baron generously
“added the same sum. I had heard my
“daughter was near town; the circumstances of her distress were aggravated
“in the accounts I had received. Providence, in pity to my age and infirmities, at last brought us together;
“I advertised her in the papers; and our
“guardian angel used such means to discover my lodgings, as had the desired
“effect. My children are now happy; they were married last week. Our generous protector gave Nancy to her
“faithful William. We propose leaving
“this place soon; and shall finish our
“days

"days in praying for the happiness of
 "our benefactor."

"You will suppose," continued Miss Finch, "my dear Lady Stanley, how
 "much I was affected with this little
 "narrative. I left the good folks with
 "my heart filled with resentment against
 "Montague, and complacency towards
 "Ton-hausen. You will believe I did
 "not hesitate long about the dismissal
 "of the former; and my frequent con-
 "versations on this head with the lat-
 "ter has made him a very favourable
 "interest in my bosom. Not that I have
 "the vanity to think he possesses any pre-
 "dilection in my favour; but, till I see
 "a man I like as well as him, I will not
 "receive the addresses of any one."

We joined in our commendation of the generous Baron. The manner in which he disclaimed all praise, Miss Finch said, served only to render him still more praise-worthy. He begged her to keep this little affair a secret, and particularly from me. I asked Miss Finch, why he should make that request? "I
 "know not indeed," she answered, "ex-
 "cept

“cept that, knowing I was more intimate
“with you than any one beside, he might
“mention your name by way of enforcing the restriction.” Soon after this, Miss Finch took leave.

Oh, Louisa ! dare I, even to your indulgent bosom, confide my secret thoughts ? How did I lament not being in the Park the day of this adventure. I might then have been the envied *confidante* of the amiable Ton-hausen. They have had frequent conversations in consequence. The softness which the melancholy detail gave to Miss Finch’s looks and expressions, have deeply impressed the mind of the Baron. Should I have shewn less sensibility ? I have, indeed, rather sought to conceal the tenderness of my soul. I have been constrained to do so. Miss Finch has given her’s full scope, and has riveted the chain which her beauty and accomplishments first forged. But what am I doing ? Oh ! my sister, chide me for thus giving loose to such expressions. How much am I to blame ! How infinitely more prudent is the Baron ! He begged that I, of all persons,

persons, should not know his generosity. Heavens! what an idea does that give birth to! He has seen—Oh! Louisa, what will become of me, if he should have discovered the struggles of my soul? If he should have searched into the recesses of my heart, and developed the thin veil I spread over the feelings I have laboured incessantly to overcome! He then, perhaps, wished to conceal his excellencies from me, lest I should be too partial to them. I ought then to copy his discretion. I will do so; Yes, Louisa, I will drive his image from my bosom! I ought—I know it would be my interest to wish him married to Miss Finch, or any one that would make him happy. I am culpable in harbouring the remotest desire of his preserving his attachment to me. He has had virtue enough to conquer so *improper* an attachment; and, if improper in him, how infinitely more so in me! But I will dwell no longer on this forbidden subject; let me set bounds to my pen, as an earnest that I most truly mean to do so to my thoughts.

Think

Think what an enormous packet I shall send you. Preserve your affection for me, my dearest sister; and, trust to my asseverations, you shall have no cause to blush for

JULIA STANLEY.

LETTER XXVII.

TO MISS GRENVILLE.

THIS morning I dispatched to Anderton's Coffee-house the most elegant locket in hair that you ever saw. May I be permitted to say thus much, when the design was all my own? Yet, why not give myself praise when I can? The locket is in the form and size of that bracelet I sent you; the device, an altar, on which is inscribed these words, *To Gratitude*, an elegant figure of a woman making an offering on her knees, and a winged cherub bearing the incense to heaven. A narrow plait of hair, about the breadth of penny ribbon, is fastened on each side the locket, near the top, by three

three diamonds, and united with a bow of diamonds, by which it may hang to a ribbon. I assure you, it is exceedingly pretty. I hope the Sylph will approve of it. I forget to tell you, as the hair was taken from my head by your dear hand before I married, I took the fancy of putting the initials I. G. instead of I. S. It was a whim that seized me, because the hair did never belong to I. S.

Adieu!

L E T T E R XXVIII.

From the SYLPH to Lady STANLEY.

WILL my amiable charge be ever thus encreasing my veneration, my almost adoration of her perfections? Yes, Julia; still pursue these methods, and my whole life will be too confined a period to render you my acknowledgements. Its best services have, and ever shall be, devoted to your advantage. I have no other business, and, I am sure, no other pleasure, in this world, than to watch over your interest; and, if I should

should at any time be so fortunate as to have procured you the smallest share of felicity, or saved you from the minutest inquietude, I shall feel myself amply repaid; repaid! where have I learnt so cold an expression? from the earth-born sons of clay? I shall feel a bliss beyond the sensation of a mortal!

None but a mind delicate as your own can form an idea of the sentimental joy I experienced on seeing the letters I. G. on the most elegant of devices, an emblem of the lovely giver! There was a purity, a chasteness of thought, in the design, which can only be conceived; all expression would be faint; even my Julia can hardly define it. Wonder not at my boundless partiality to you. You know not, you see not, yourself, as I *know* and *see* you. I pierce through the recesses of your soul; each fold expands itself to my eye; the struggles of your mind are open to my view; I see how nobly your virtue towers over the involuntary tribute you pay to concealed merit. But be not uneasy. Feel not humiliated,
that

that the secret of your mind is discovered to me. Heaven sees our thoughts, and reads our hearts; we know it; but feel no restraint therefrom. Consider me as Heaven's agent, and be not dismayed at the idea of having a window in your breast, when only the sincerest, the most disinterested of your friends, is allowed the privilege of looking through it. Adieu! May the blest above (thy only superiors), guard you from ill! So prays your

SYLPH.

 LETTER XXIX.

To the SYLPH.

THOUGH encouraged by the commendations of my Sylph, I tremble when you tell me the most retired secrets of my soul are open to your view. You say you have seen its struggles. Oh! that you alone have seen them! Could I be assured, that one *other* is yet a stranger to those struggles, I should feel no more humiliated (though that word is not sufficiently

ciently strong to express my meaning), than I do in my confessions to Heaven; because I am taught to believe, that our thoughts are involuntary, and that we are not answerable for them, unless they tend to excite us to evil actions. Mine, thank God! have done me no other mischief, than robbing me of that *repose*, which, perhaps, had I been blest with insensibility, might have been my portion. But a very large share of insensibility must have been dealt out to me, to have guarded me from my sense of merit in one person, and my feeling no affliction at the want of it in another, that *other* too, with whose fate mine is unavoidably connected. I must do myself that justice to say, my heart would have remained fixed with my hand, had my husband remained the same. Had *he* known no change, my affections would have centred in him; that is, I should have passed through life a dutious and observant partner of his cares and pleasures. When I married, I had never loved any but my own relations; indeed I had seen no *one* to love. The language,

language, and its emotions, were equally strangers to my ears or heart. Sir William Stanley was the first man who used the one, and consequently, in a bosom so young and inexperienced as mine, created the other. He told me, he loved. I blushed, and felt confused; unhappily, I construed these indications of self-love into an attachment for him. Although this bore but a small relation to love, yet, in a breast where virtue and a natural tenderness resided, it would have been sufficient to have guarded my heart from receiving any other impression. He did so, till repeated slights and irregularities on one hand, and on the other all the virtues and graces that can adorn and beautify the mind, raised a conflict in my bosom, that has destroyed my peace, and hurt my constitution. I have a beloved sister, who deserves all the affection I bear her; from her I have concealed nothing. She has read every secret of my heart; for, when I wrote to her, reserve was banished from my pen. This unfortunate predilection, which, believe me, I have from the first combated

combated with all my force, has given my Louisa, who has the tenderest soul, the utmost uneasiness. I have very lately assured her, my resolves to conquer this fatal attachment are fixed and permanent. I doubt (and she thinks perhaps) I have too often indulged myself in dwelling upon the dangerous subject in my frequent letters. I have given my word I will mention him no more. Oh! my Sylph! how has he risen in my esteem from a recent story I have heard of him! How hard is my fate (you can read my thoughts, so that to endeavour to soften the expression would be needless), that I am constrained to obey the man I can neither love nor honour! and, alas! love the man, who is not, nor can be, any thing to me.

I have vowed to my sister, myself, and now to you, that, however hardly treated, yet virtue and rectitude shall be my guide. I arrogate no great merit to myself in still preserving myself untainted in this vortex of folly and vice. No one falls all at once; and I have no temptation to do so. The man I
esteem

esteem above all others is superior to all others. His manners refined, generous, virtuous, humane; oh! when shall I fill the catalogue of his excellent qualities? He pays a deference to me, at least used to do, because I was tinctured with the licentious fashion of the times; he would lose that esteem for me, were I to act without decency and discretion; and I hope I know enough of my heart, to say, I should no longer feel an attachment for him, did he countenance vice. Alas! what is to be inferred from this, but that I shall carry this fatal preference with me to the grave! Let me, however, descend to *it*, without bringing disgrace on myself, sorrow on my beloved relations, and repentance on my Sylph, for having thrown away his counsels on an ingrate; and I will peacefully retire from a world for whose pleasures I have very little taste.

Adieu.

LETTER XXX.

To Lady STANLEY.

My dearest Sister,

IT is with infinite pleasure I receive your promise, of no longer indulging your pen with a subject which has too much engaged your thoughts of late; a pleasure, heightened by the assurance, that your silence in future shall be an earnest of banishing an image from your idea, which I cannot but own, from the picture you have drawn, is very amiable, and, * for that reason, very dangerous. I will, my Julia, emulate your example; this shall be the last letter that treats on this to-be-forbidden theme. Permit me, therefore, to make some comment on your long letter. Sure never two people were more strongly contrasted than the Baron and the Colonel. The one seems the kindly sun, cherishing the tender herbage of the field; the other, the blasting mildew, breathing its pestiferous venom over every beautiful plant and flower.

However,

However, do you, my love, only regard them as virtue and vice personified; look on them as patterns and examples; view them in no other light; for in *no other* can they be of any advantage to you. You are extremely reprehensible (I hope, and believe, I shall never have occasion to use such harsh language again) in your strictures on the supposed change in the Baron's sentiments. You absolutely seem to regret, if not express anger, that *he* has had virtue sufficient to resist the violence of an improper attachment. The efforts he has made, and my partiality for you supposes them not to have been easily made, ought to convince you, the conquest over ourselves is possible, though oftentimes difficult. It is, I believe, (and I may say I am certain from my own experience) a very mistaken notion, that we nourish our afflictions, by keeping them to ourselves. I said, I know so experimentally. While I indulged myself, and your tenderness induced you to do the same, in lamenting in the most pathetic language the perfidy of

Mr. Montgomery and Emily Wingrove, I increased the wounds which that *perfidy* occasioned; but, when I took the resolution of never mentioning their names, or ever suffering myself to dwell on former scenes, burning every letter I had received from either; though these efforts cost me floods of tears, and many sleepless nights, yet, in time, my reflections lost much of their poignancy; and I chiefly attribute it to my steady adherence to my laudable resolution. He deserved not my tenderness, even if only because he was married to another. This is the first time I have suffered my pen to write his name since that determination; nor does he now ever mix with my thoughts unless by chance; and then quite as an indifferent person. I have recalled his idea for no other reason, than to convince you, that, although painful, yet self-conquest is attainable. You will not think I am endued with less sensibility than you are; and I had long been authorized to indulge my attachment to this ingrate, and had long been cruelly deceived into
a belief,

a belief, that his regard was equal to mine; while, from the first, you could have no *hope* to lead you on by flowery footsteps to the confines of *disappointment* and *despair*; for to those goals does that fallacious phantom too frequently lead. You envy Miss Finch the distinction which accident induced the Baron to pay her, by making her his *confidante*. Had you been on the spot, it is possible you might have shared his confidence; but, believe me, I am thankful to Heaven, that chance threw you not in his way; with your natural tenderness, and your unhappy predilection, I tremble for what might have been the consequence of frequent conversations, in which pity and compassion bore so large a share, as perhaps might have superseded every other consideration. I wish from my soul, and hope my Julia will soon join my wish, that the Baron may be in earnest in his attention to Miss Finch. I wish to have him married, that his engagements may increase, and prevent your seeing him so often as you now do, for undoubtedly

your difficulty will be greater; but consider, my dear Julia, your triumph will be *greater* likewise. It is sometimes harder to turn one's eyes from a pleasing object than one's thoughts; yet there is nothing which may not be achieved by resolution and perseverance; both of which, I question not, my beloved will exert, if it be but to lighten the oppressed mind of her faithful

LOUISA GRENVILLE.

L E T T E R XXXI.

To the SYLPH.

WILL my kind guardian candidly inform me, if he thinks I may comply with the desire of Sir William, in going next Thursday to the masquerade at the Pantheon? Without your previous advice, I would not willingly consent. Is it a diversion of which I may participate without danger? Though I doubt there is hardly decency enough left in this part of the world, that *vice* need wear a mask; yet do not people give a greater scope to their
licentious

licentious inclinations while under that veil? However, if you think I may venture with safety, I will indulge my husband, who seems to have set his mind on my accompanying his party thither. Miss Finch has promised to go if I go; and, as she has been often to those motley meetings, assures me she will take care of me. Sir William does not know of my application to that lady; but I did so, merely to gain time to inform you, that I might have your sanction (or be justified by your advising the contrary), either to accept or reject the invitation.

I am ever your obliged,

J. S.

LETTER XXXII.

From the SYLPH.

WHEN the face is masked, the mind is uncovered. From the conduct and language of those who frequent masquerades, we may judge of the principles of their souls. A modest

woman will blush in the dark; and a man of honour would scorn to use expressions while behind a vizard, which he would not openly avow in the face of day. A masquerade is then the criterion, by which you should form your opinion of people; and, as I believe I have before observed to my Julia, that female companions are either the safest or most dangerous of any, you may make this trial, whether Miss F. is, or is not, one in whom you may confide. When I say *confide*, I would not be understood that you should place an unlimited confidence in her; there is no occasion to lay our hearts bare to the inspection of all our intimates; we should lessen the compliment we mean to pay to our particular friends, by destroying that distinguishing mark. But you want a female companion. Indeed, for your sake, I should wish you one older than Miss F. and a married woman; yet, unless she was very prudent, you had better be the *leader* than the *led*; therefore, upon the whole, perhaps it is as well as it is.

I shall

I shall never enough admire your amiable condescension, in asking (in a manner) my permission to go to the Pantheon. And at the same time I feel the delicacy of your situation, and the effect it must have on a woman of your exquisite sensibility, to be constrained to appeal to another in an article wherein her husband ought to be the properest guide. Unhappily for you, Sir William will find so many engagements, that the protection of his wife must be left either to her own discretion, or to strangers. But your Sylph, my Julia, will never desert you. You request my leave to go thither. I freely grant that, and even more than you desire. I will meet my charge among the motley groupe. I do not demand a description of your dress; for, oh! what disguise can conceal you from him whose heart only vibrates in union with yours? I will not inform you how I shall be habited that night, as I have not a doubt but that I shall soon be discovered by you, though I shall be invisible to all beside. Only you will see me; and I, of course, shall only see

D 5

you ; ;

58 THE SYLPH.

you; you, who are all and every thing
in this world to your faithful attendant
SYLPH.

To the SYLPH.

LETTER XXXIII.

WILL you ever thus be adding to
my weight of obligation! Yes!
my Sylph!—be still thus kind, thus in-
dulgent; and be assured your benevo-
lence shall be repaid by my steady ad-
herence to your virtuous counsel. Adieu!
Thursday is eagerly wished for by yours,
J. S.

LETTER XXXIV.

To Miss GRENVILLE.

ENCLOSED my Louisa will find
some letters which have passed be-
tween the Sylph and your Julia. I have
sent them, to inform you of my being
present at a masquerade, in compliance
with the taste of Sir William, who was
very desirous of my exhibiting myself
there.

there. As he has of late never intimated an inclination to have me in any of his parties till this whim seized him, I thought it would not become me to refuse my consent. You will find, however, I was not so dutiful a wife as to pay an implicit obedience to his mandate without taking the concurrence of my guardian angel on the subject. My dear, you must be first circumstanced as I am (which Heaven forbid!), before you can form an idea of the satisfaction I felt on the assurances of my Sylph's being present. No words can convey it to you. It seemed as if I was going to enjoy the ultimate wish of my heart. As to my dress, I told Sir William I would leave the choice of it to him, not doubting, in matters of elegant taste, he would be far superior to me. I made him this compliment, as I have been long convinced he has no other pleasure in possessing me, than what is excited by the admiration which other people bestow on me. Nay, he has said, unless he heard every body say his wife was one of the handsomest

women at court, he would never suffer her to appear there, or any where else.

That I might do credit to his taste, I was to be most superbly brilliant; and Sir William desired to see my jewels. He objected to their manner of being set, though they were quite new-done when he married. But now these were detestable, horridly *outré*, and so barbarously antique, that I could only appear as Rembrandt's Wife, or some such relic of ancient history. As I had promised to be guided by him, I acquiesced in what I thought a very unnecessary expence; but was much laughed at, when I expressed my amazement at the jeweller's saying the setting would come to about two hundred pounds. This is well worth while for an evening's amusement, for they are now in such whimsical forms, that they will be scarce fit for any other purpose. And oh! my Louisa! do you not think I was cut to the soul when I had this painful reflection to make, that many honest and industrious tradesmen are every day dunning for their lawful demands,

demands, while we are thus throwing away hundreds after hundreds, without affording the least heart-felt satisfaction?

Well, at last my dress was completed; but what character I assumed I know not, unless I was the epitome of the folly of this world. I thought myself only an agent to support all the frippery and finery of *Tavistock-street*; but, however, I received many compliments on the figure I made; and some people of the first fashion pronounced me to be quite the thing. They say, one may believe the women when they praise one of their own sex; and Miss Finch said, I had contrived to heighten and improve every charm with which Nature had endowed me. Sir William seemed to tread on air, to see and hear the commendations which were lavished on me from all sides. To a man of his taste, I am no more than any fashionable piece of furniture or new equipage; or, what will come nearer our idea of things, a beautiful prospect, which a man fancies he shall never be tired of beholding, and therefore builds himself an house within view of it; by
 that

that time he is fixed, he hardly remembers what was his motive, nor ever feels any pleasure but in pointing out its various perfections to his guests; his vanity is awhile gratified, but even that soon loses its *gilt*; and he wonders how others can be pleased with objects now grown familiar, and, consequently, indifferent to him. But I am running quite out of the course. Suppose me now dressed, and mingling with a fantastic groupe of all kind of forms and figures, striving to disengage my eyes from the throng, to single out my Sylph. Our usual party was there; Miss Finch, Lady Barton, a distant relation of her's, the Baron, Lord Biddulph, and some others; but it was impossible to keep long together. Sometimes I found myself with one; then they were gone, and I was *tête-à-tête* with somebody else; for a good while I observed a mask, who looked like a fortune-teller, followed me about, particularly when the Baron and Miss Finch were with me. I thought I must say something, so I asked him if he would tell me my fortune. "Go into the next
"room,"

"room," said he, in a whisper, "and
 "you shall see one more learned in the
 "occult science than you think ; but I
 "shall say no more while you are sur-
 "rounded with so many observers." No-
 thing is so easy as to get away from your
 company in a crowd : I slipped from
 them, and went into a room which was
 nearly empty, and still followed by the
 conjuror. I seated myself on a sofa,
 and just turned my head round, when I
 perceived the most elegant creature that
 imagination can form placed by me.
 I started, half-breathless with surprize.
 "Be not alarmed, my Julia," said the
 phantom, (for such I at first thought it)
 "be not alarmed at the appearance of
 "your Sylph." He took my hand in
 his, and, pressing it gently, speaking all
 the while in a soft kind of whisper,
 "Does my amiable charge repent her
 "condescension in teaching me to believe
 "she would be pleased to see her faith-
 "ful adherent ?" I begged him to attri-
 bute my tremor to the hurry of spirits so
 new a scene excited, and, in part, to the
 pleasure his presence afforded me. But,
 before

64. THE SYLPH.

before I proceed, I will describe his dress : his figure in itself seems the most perfect I ever saw ; the finest harmony of shape ; a waistcoat and breeches of silver tissue, exactly fitted to his body ; buskins of the same, fringed, &c. ; a blue silk mantle depending from one shoulder, to which it was secured by a diamond epaulette, falling in beautiful folds upon the ground ; this robe was starred all over with plated silver, which had a most brilliant effect ; on each shoulder was placed a transparent wing of painted gauze, which looked like peacock's feathers ; a cap, suitable to the whole dress, which was certainly the most elegant and best contrived that can be imagined. I gazed on him with the most perfect admiration. Ah ! how I longed to see his face, which the envious mask concealed. His hair hung in sportive ringlets ; and just carelessly restrained from wandering too far by a white ribband. In short, the most luxuriant fancy could hardly create a more captivating object. When my astonishment a little subsided, I found utterance. " How is it possible
 " I should

“ I should be so great a favourite of fortune as to interest you in my welfare ?”
 “ We have each our task allotted us,” he answered, “ from the beginning of the world, and it was my happy privilege to watch over your destiny.”
 “ I speak to you as a man,” said I, “ but you answer only as a Sylph.”

“ Believe me,” he replied, “ it is the safest character I can assume. I must divest myself of my feelings as a *man*, or I should be too much enamoured to be serviceable to you : I shut my eyes to the beauties of your person, which excites tumultuous raptures in the chastest bosom, and only allow myself the free contemplation of your interior perfections. There your virtue secures me, and renders my attachment as pure as your own pure breast. I could not, however, resist this opportunity of paying my personal *devoir* to you, and yet I feel too sensibly I shall be a sufferer from my indulgence; but I will never forget that I am placed over you as your guardian-angel and protector, and that my sole business on earth

"earth is to secure you from the wiles
 "and snares which are daily practised
 "against youth and beauty. What does
 "my excellent pupil say? Does she still
 "cheerfully submit herself to my gui-
 "dance?" While he spoke this, he had
 again taken my hand, and pressed it
 with rapture to his bosom, which, beat-
 ing with violence, I own caused no
 small emotion in mine. I gently with-
 drew my hand, and said, with as com-
 posed a voice as I could command, "Yes,
 "my Sylph, I do most readily resign
 "myself to your protection, and shall
 "never feel a wish to put any restriction
 "on it, while I am enabled to judge of
 "you from your own criterion; while
 "virtue presides over your lessons;
 "while your instructions are calculated
 "to make me a good and respectable
 "character, I can form no wish to depart
 "from them." He felt the delicacy of
 the reproof, and, sighing, said, "Let
 "me never depart from that sacred cha-
 "racter! Let me still remember I am
 "your Sylph! But I believe I have be-
 "fore said, a time may come when you
 "will

" will no longer stand in need of my
 " interposition. Shall I own to you, I
 " sicken at the idea of my being useless
 " to you?" " The time can never arrive
 " in which you will not be serviceable
 " to me, or, at least, when I shall not
 " be inclined to ask and follow your ad-
 " vice." " Amiable Julia! may I venture
 " to ask you this question? If fate
 " should ever put it in your power to
 " make a second choice, would you con-
 " sult your Sylph?" " Hear me," cried I,
 " while I give you my hand on it, and
 " attest heaven to witness my vow: that
 " if I should have the fate (which may
 " that heaven avert!) to out-live Sir Wil-
 " liam, I will abide by your decision;
 " neither my hand nor affections shall be
 " disposed of without your concurrence.
 " My obligations to you are unbounded;
 " my confidence in you shall likewise be
 " the same; I can make no other return
 " than to resign myself solely to your
 " guidance in that and every other
 " concern of moment to me."

" Are you aware of what you have
 " said, Lady Stanley?"

" It

“It is past recall,” I answered; “and
 “if the vow could return again into my
 “bosom, it should only be to issue thence
 “more strongly ratified.”

“Oh!” cried he, clasping his hands
 together, “Oh! thou merciful Father,
 “make me but worthy of this amiable,
 “and most excellent of all thy creatures
 “confidence! None but the most accursed
 “of villains could abuse such goodness.
 “The blameless purity and innocent
 “simplicity of your heart would make
 “a convert of a libertine.” “Alas!”
 said I, “that, I fear, is impossible; but
 “how infinitely happy should I be, if my
 “utmost efforts could work the least re-
 “formation in my husband! Could I but
 “prevail on him to quit this destructive
 “place, and retire into the peaceful coun-
 “try, I should esteem myself a fortunate
 “woman.”

“And could you really quit these gay
 “scenes, nor *cast one longing lingering*
 “*look behind?*”

“Yes,” I replied with vivacity, “nor
 “even cast a thought on what I had left
 “behind!”

“Would

“ Would no one be remembered with
“ a tender regret? Would your Sylph
“ be entirely forgotten?”

“ My Sylph,” I answered, “ is pos-
“ sessed of the power of omnipresence;
“ he would still be with me, wherever I
“ went.”

“ And would no other ever be thought
“ of? You blush, Lady Stanley; the
“ face is the needle which points to the
“ polar-star, the heart; from that in-
“ formation, may I not conclude, some
“ one, whom you would leave behind,
“ would mix with your ideas in your re-
“ tirement, and that, even in solitude,
“ you would not be alone?”

I felt my cheeks glow while he spoke;
but, as I was a mask, I did not suppose the
Sylph could discover the emotion his dis-
course caused. “ Since,” said I in a
faultering voice, “ you are capable of
“ reading my heart, it is unnecessary to
“ declare its sentiments to you; but it
“ would be my purpose, in retirement,
“ to obliterate every idea which might
“ conduce to rob my mind of peace; I
“ should endeavour to reform as well as

“ my husband ; and if he would oblige
“ me by such a compliance to my will,
“ I should think I could do no less than
“ seek to amuse him, and should, indeed,
“ devote my whole time and study to
“ that purpose.”

“ You may think I probe too deep ;
“ but is not your desire of retirement
“ stronger, since you have conceived the
“ idea of the Baron’s entertaining a *pen-*
“ *chant* for Miss Finch, than it has been
“ heretofore !”

I sighed—“ Indeed you do probe very
“ deep ; and the pain you cause is ex-
“ quisite : but I know it is your friendly
“ concern for me ; and it proves how
“ needful it is to apply some remedy for
“ the wound, the examination of which
“ is so acute. Instruct me, ought I to
“ wish him married ? Should I be hap-
“ pier if he was so ? And if he married
“ Miss Finch, should I not be as much
“ exposed to danger as at present, for
“ his amiable qualities are more of the
“ domestic kind ?”

“ I hardly know how to answer to
“ these interrogatories ; nor am I judge
“ of

“ of the heart and inclinations of the
 “ Baron ; only thus much : if you have
 “ ever had any cause to believe him im-
 “ pressed with your idea, I cannot sup-
 “ pose it possible for Miss Finch, or any
 “ other woman, to obliterate that idea.
 “ But, *the heart of man is deceitful above*
 “ *all things*. For the sake of your in-
 “ terest, I wish Sir William would adopt
 “ your plan, tho’ I have my doubts
 “ that his affairs are not in the power of
 “ any œconomy to arrange ; and this
 “ consideration urges me to enforce what
 “ I have before advised, that you do
 “ not surrender up any farther part of
 “ your jointure, as *that* may, too soon, be
 “ your sole support ; and I have seen a
 “ recent proof of what mean subterfuges
 “ some men are necessitated to fly to, in
 “ order to extricate themselves for a little
 “ time. But the room fills ; our conver-
 “ sation may be noticed ; and, in this age
 “ of dissipation and licentiousness, to
 “ escape censure we must not stray
 “ within the limits of impropriety. Your
 “ having been so long *tête-à-tête* with
 “ any character will be observed. Adieu
 “ there-

“therefore for the present—see, Miss Finch is approaching.” I turned my eye towards the door—the Sylph rose—I did the same—he pressed my hand on his quitting it; I cast my eye round, but I saw him no more; how he escaped my view I know not. Miss Finch by this time bustled through the crowd, and asked me where I had been, and whether I had seen the Baron, whom she had dispatched to seek after me?

The Baron then coming up, rallied me for hiding myself from the party, and losing a share of merriment which had been occasioned by two whimsical masks making themselves very ridiculous to entertain the company. I assured them I had not quitted that place after I missed them in the great room; but, however, adding, that I had determined to wait there till some of the party joined me, as I had not courage to venture a *tour* of the rooms by myself. To be sure all this account was not strictly true; but I was obliged to make some excuse for my behaviour, which otherwise might have caused some suspicion. They willingly accom-

accompanied me through every room, but my eyes could no where fix on the object they were in search of, and therefore returned from their survey dissatisfied. I complained of fatigue, which was really true, for I had no pleasure in the hurry and confusion of the multitude, and it grew late. I shall frighten you, Louisa, by telling you the hour; but we did not go till twelve at night. I soon met with Sir William, and on my expressing an inclination to retire, to my great astonishment, instead of censuring, he commended my resolution, and hastened to the door to procure my carriage. When you proceed, my dear Louisa, you will wonder at my being able to pursue, in so methodical a manner, this little narrative; but I have taken some time to let my thoughts subside, that I might not anticipate any circumstance of an event that may be productive of very serious consequences. Well then, pleased as I was with Sir William's ready compliance with my request of returning, suppose me seated in my chair, and giving way to some hopes that he would yet see his errors, and

some method be pitched on to relieve all. He was ready to hand me out of the chair, and led me up stairs into my dressing-room. I had taken off my mask, as it was very warm; he still kept his on, and talked in the same kind of voice he practised at the masquerade. He paid me most profuse compliments on the beauty of my dress, and, throwing his arms round my waist, congratulated himself on possessing such an angel, at the same time kissing my face and bosom with such a strange kind of eagerness as made me suppose he was intoxicated; and, under that idea, being very desirous of disengaging myself from his arms, I struggled to get away from him. He pressed me to go to bed; and, in short, his behaviour was unaccountable: at last, on my persisting to intreat him to let me go, he blew out one of the candles. I then used all my force, and burst from him, and at that instant his mask gave way; and in the dress of my husband, (oh, Louisa! judge, if you can, of my terror) I beheld that villain Lord Biddulph.

“Curse

"Curse on my folly!" cried he, "that I could not restrain my raptures till I had you secure."

"Thou most insolent of wretches!" said I, throwing the most contemptuous looks at him, "how dared you assume the dress of my husband, to treat me with such indignity?" While I spoke, I rang the bell with some violence.

He attempted to make some apology for his indiscretion, urging the force of his passion, the power of my charms, and such stuff.

I stopped him short, by telling him, the only apology I should accept would be his instantly quitting the house, and never insulting me again with his presence. With a most malignant sneer on his countenance, he said, "I might indeed have supposed my caresses were disagreeable, when offered under the character of an husband; I had been more blest, at least better received; had I worn the dress of the Baron. All men, Lady Stanley, are not so blind as Sir William." I felt myself

ready to expire with confusion and anger at his base insinuation.

"Your hint," said I, "is as void of truth as you are of honour; I despise both equally; but would advise you to be cautious how you dare traduce characters so opposite to your own."

By this time a servant came in; and the hateful wretch walked off, insolently wishing me a good repose, and humming an Italian air, though it was visible what chagrin was painted on his face. Preston came into the room, to assist me in undressing:—she is by no means a favourite of mine; and, as I was extremely fatigued and unable to sit up, I did not chuse to leave my door open till Sir William came home, nor did I care to trust her with the key. I asked for Winifred. She told me, she had been in bed some hours. "Let her be called then," said I. "Can't I do what your ladyship 'bwants?'"

"No; I chuse to have Win sit with 'imed'" "I will attend your ladyship, if you please."

"It

"It would give me more pleasure if you would obey, than dispute my orders." I was vexed to the soul, and spoke with a peevishness unusual to me. She went out of the room, muttering to herself. I locked the door, terrified lest that monster had concealed himself somewhere in the house; nor would I open it till I heard Win speak. Poor girl! she got up with all the cheerfulness in the world, and sat by my bed-side till morning, Sir William not returning the whole night. My fatigue, and the perturbation of mind I laboured under, together with the total deprivation of sleep, contributed to make me extremely ill. But how shall I describe to you, my dear Louisa, the horror which the reflection of this adventure excited in me!

Though I had, by the mercy of heaven, escaped the danger, yet the apprehension it left on my mind is not to be told; and then the tacit aspersions which the base wretch threw on my character, by daring to say, he had been more *welcome* under another appearance, struck so forcibly on my heart, that I thought

I should expire, from the fears of his traducing my fame; for what might I not expect from such a consummate villain, who had so recently proved to what enormous lengths he could go to accomplish his purposes? The blessing of having frustrated his evil design could hardly calm my terrors; I thought I heard him each moment, and the agitation of my mind operated so violently on my frame, that my bed actually shook under me. Win suffered extremely from her fears of my being dangerously ill, and wanted to have my leave to send for a physician: but I too well knew it was not in the power of medicine to administer relief to my feelings; and, after telling her I was much better, begged her not to quit my room at any rate.

About eleven I rose, so weak and dispirited, that I could hardly support myself. Soon after, I heard Sir William's voice; I had scarce strength left to speak to him; he looked pale and forlorn. I had had a conflict within myself, whether I should relate the behaviour of Lord Biddulph to my husband, lest the
con-

consequences should be fatal; but my spirits were so totally exhausted, that I could not articulate a sentence without tears. "What is the matter, Julia, with you," said he, taking my hand; "you seem fatigued to death. What a poor rake you are!"

"I have had something more than *fatigue* to discompose me," answered I, sobbing; "and I think I have some reproaches to make you, for not attending me home as you promised."

"Why Lord Biddulph promised to see you home. I saw him afterwards; and he told me, he left you at your own house."

"Lord Biddulph!" said I, with the most scornful air; "and did he tell you likewise of the insolence of his behaviour? Perhaps he promised you too, that he would insult me in my own house."

"Hey-day, Julia! what's in the wind now? Lord Biddulph insult you! pray let me into the whole of this affair?" I then related the particulars of his impudent conduct, and what I conceived

his design to be, together with the repulse I had given him.

Sir William seemed extremely *chagrined*; and said, he should talk in a serious manner on the occasion to Lord Biddulph; and, if his answers were not satisfactory, he should lie under the necessity of calling him to account in the field. Terrified lest death should be the consequence of a quarrel between this infamous Lord and my husband, I conjured Sir William not to take any notice of the affair, any otherwise than to give up his acquaintance; a circumstance much wished for by me, as I have great reason to believe, Sir William's passion for play was excited by his intimacy with him; and, perhaps, may have led him to all the enormities he has too readily, and too rapidly, plunged himself into. He made no scruple to assure me, that he should find no difficulty in relinquishing the acquaintance; and joined with me, that a silent contempt would be the most cutting reproof to a man of his cast. On my part, I am resolved my doors shall never grant him access again; and, if

if Sir William should entirely break with him (which, after this atrocious behaviour, I think he must), I may be very happy that I have been the instrument, since I have had such an escape.

But still, Louisa, the inuendo of Lord Biddulph disturbs my peace. How shall I quiet my apprehensions? Does he dare scrutinize my conduct, and harbour suspicions of my predilection for a certain unfortunate? Base as is his soul, he cannot entertain an idea of the purity of a virtuous attachment! Ah! that speech of his has sunk deep in my memory; no time will efface it. When I have been struggling too—yes, Louisa, when I have been combating this fatal—But what am I doing? Why do I use these interdicted expressions? I have done. Alas! what is become of my boasting? If I cannot prescribe rules to a pen, which I can, in one moment, throw into the fire; how shall I restrain the secret murmurings of my mind, whose thoughts I can with difficulty silence, or even control? Adieu! yours, more than her own,

JULIA STANLEY.

LETTER XXXV.

To Miss GRENVILLE.

ALAS! Louisa, fresh difficulties arise every day; and every day I find an exertion of my spirits more necessary, and myself less able to exert them. Sir William told me this morning, that he had lost frequent sums to Lord Bid-dulph (it wounds my soul to write his detested name); and since it was prudent to give up the acquaintance, it became highly incumbent on him to discharge these play-debts, for which purpose he must have recourse to me, and apprehended he should find no difficulty, as I had expressed my wish of his breaking immediately with his lordship. This was only the prelude to a proposal of my resignation of my marriage articles. My ready compliance with his former demands emboldened him to be urgent with me on this occasion. At first, I made some scruples, alledging the necessity there was of keeping something by us for a future day, as I had too much reason

reason to apprehend, that what I could call my own would be all we should have to support us. This remonstrance of mine, however just, threw Sir William into a violent rage; he paced about the room like a madman; swore that his difficulties proceeded from my damned prudery; and that I should extricate him, or abide by the consequences. In short, Louisa, he appeared in a light entirely new to me; I was almost petrified with terror, and absolutely thought once he would beat me, for he came up to me with such fierce looks, and seized me by the arm, which he actually bruised with his grasp, and bade me, at my peril, refuse to surrender the writings to him. After giving me a violent shake, he pushed me from him with such force that I fell down, unable to support myself from the trembling with which my whole frame was possessed.

“Don’t think to practise any of the
 “curfed arts of your sex upon me;
 “don’t pretend to throw yourself into
 “fits.”

E 6

“I scorn.

"I scorn your imputation, Sir William," said I, half fainting and breathless, "nor shall I make any resistance or opposition to your leaving me a beggar. I have now reason to believe I shall not live to want what you are determined to force from me, as these violent methods will soon deprive me of my existence, even if *you* would withhold the murderous knife."

"Come, none of your damned whining; let me have the papers; and let us not think any more about it." He offered to raise me. "I want not your assistance," said I. "Oh! you are sulky, are you; but I shall let you know, madam, these airs will not do with me." I had seated myself on a chair, and leaned my elbow on a table, supporting my head with my hand; he snatched my hand away from my face, while he was making the last speech. "What the devil! am I to wait all day for the papers? Where are the keys?" "Take them," said I, drawing them from my pocket; "do what you will, provided you leave me to myself."

"Damned

"Damned sex!" cried he. "Wives or mistresses, by Heaven! you are all alike." So saying, he went out of the room, and, opening my bureau, possessed himself of the parchment so much desired by him. I have not seen him since, and now it is past eleven. What a fate is mine! However, I have no more to give up; so he cannot storm at, or threaten me again, since I am now a beggar as well as himself. I shall sit about an hour longer, and then I shall fasten my door for the night; and I hope he will not insist on my opening it for him. I make Win'lie in a little bed in a closet within my room. She is the only domestic I can place the least confidence in. She sees my eyes red with weeping; she sheds tears, but asks no questions. Farewell, my dearest Louisa: pity the sufferings of thy sister, who feels every woe augmented by the grief she causes in your sympathizing breast.

Adieu! Adieu!

J. S.

LET-

LETTER XXXVI.

From the SYLPH.

I FIND my admonitions have failed, and my Julia has relinquished all her future dependance. Did you not promise an implicit obedience to my advice? How comes it then, that your husband triumphs in having the power of still visiting the gaming-tables, and betting with the utmost *eclat*? Settlements, as the late Lord Hardwicke used to say, are the foolishest bonds in nature, since there never yet was a woman who might not be kissed or kicked out of it: which of those methods Sir William has adopted, I know not; but it is plain it was a successful one. I pity you, my Julia; I grieve for you; and much fear, now Sir William has lost all restraint, he will lose the appearance of it likewise. What resource will he pursue next? Be on your guard, my most amiable friend; my fore-sight deceives me, or your danger is great. For when a man can once lose his humanity,
so

so far as to deprive his wife of the means of subsisting herself, I much, very much fear he will so effectually lose his honour likewise, as to make a property of hers. May I judge too severely! May Sir William be an exception to my rule! And oh! may you, the fairest work of Heaven, be equally its care!

Adieu!

LETTER XXXVII.

To the SYLPH.

ALAS! I look for comfort when I open my kind Sylph's letters; yet in this before me you only point out the shoals and quicksands—but hold not out your sustaining hand, to guide me through the devious path. I have disobeyed your behest; but you know not how I have been urged, and my pained soul cannot support the repetition. I will ever be implicit in my obedience to you, as far as *I* am concerned only; as to this particular point, you would not have had me disobeyed my husband, I

am sure. Indeed I could do no other than I did. If he should make an ill use of the sums raised, I am not answerable for it; but, if he had been driven to any fatal exigence through my refusal, my wretchedness would have been more exquisite than it now is, which I think would have exceeded what I could have supported. Something is in agitation now; but what I am totally a stranger to. I have just heard from one of my servants, that Mr. Stanley, an uncle of Sir William's, is expected in town. Would to Heaven he may have the will and power to extricate us! but I hear he is of a most morose temper, and was never on good terms with his nephew. The dangers you hint at, I hope, and pray without ceasing to Heaven, to be delivered from. Oh! that Sir William would permit me to return to my dear father and sister! in their kind embraces I should lose the remembrance of the tempests I have undergone; like the poor shipwrecked mariner, I should hail the friendly port, and never, never trust the deceitful ocean.

ocean more. But ah! how fruitless this wish! Here I am doomed to stay, a wretch undone.

Adieu!

LETTER XXXVIII.

To Miss GRENVILLE.

THE Baron called here this morning. Don't be angry with me, my dearest Louisa, for mentioning *his* name, this will indeed be the last time. Never more will thy sister behold him. He is gone; yes, Louisa, I shall never see him again. But will his looks, his sighs, and tears, be forgotten? Oh! never, never! He came to bid me adieu. "Could I but leave you happy," he cried in scarce articulate accents—"Was I but blest with the remote hope of your having your merit rewarded in this world, I should quit you with less regret and anguish. Oh! Lady Stanley! best of women! I mean not to lay claim to your gratitude; far be such an idea from my soul! but
"for

"for your sake I leave the kingdom."
 "For mine!" I exclaimed, clasping my
 hands wildly together, hardly knowing
 what I said or did, "What! leave me!
 "Leave the kingdom for my sake! Oh!
 "my God! what advantage can accrue
 "to me by losing"—I could not pro-
 ceed; my voice failed me, and I re-
 mained the petrified statue of despair.
 "Lady Stanley," said he with an as-
 sumed calmness, "be composed, and
 "hear me. In an age like this, where
 "the examples of vice are so many
 "and so prevalent, though a woman is
 "chaste as the icicle that hangs on Dian's
 "temple, still she will be suspected;
 "and, was the sun never to look upon
 "her, yet she would be tainted by
 "the envenomed breath of slander.
 "Lady Anne Parker has dared in a
 "public company to say, that the most
 "virtuous and lovely of her sex will
 "speedily find consolation for the in-
 "fidelity of her husband, by making
 "reprisals; her malevolence has far-
 "ther induced her to point her finger to
 "one, who adores all the virtues with
 "which

" which Heaven first endued woman in
 " your form. A voluntary banishment
 " on my side may wipe off this tran-
 " sient eclipse of the fairest and most
 " amiable character in the world, and
 " the beauties of it shine forth with
 " greater lustre, like the diamond, which
 " can only be sullied by the breath,
 " and which evaporates in an instant,
 " and beams with fresh brilliancy. I
 " would not wish you to look into my
 " heart," added he with a softened
 voice, " lest your compassion might
 " affect you too much; yet you know
 " not, you never can know, what I
 " have suffered, and must for ever
 " suffer.

" Condemn'd; alas! whole ages to deplore,
 " And image charms I must behold no more."

I sat motionless during his speech;
 but, finding him silent, and, I believe,
 from his emotions, unable to proceed,
 " Behold," cried I, " with what a com-
 " posed resignation I submit to my fate.
 " I hoped I had been too inconsiderable
 " to have excited the tongue of slander,
 " or fix its sting in my bosom. But
 " may

“may you, my friend, regain your
“peace and happiness in your native
“country!”

“My native country!” exclaimed he,
“What is my native country, what
“the whole globe itself, to that spot
“which contains all? But I will say no
“more. I dare not trust myself, I must
“not. Oh Julia! forgive me! Adieu,
“for ever!” I had no voice to detain
him; I suffered him to quit the room,
and my eyes lost sight of him—for ever!

I remained with my eyes stupidly
fixed on the door. Oh! Louisa, dare I
tell you? my soul seemed to follow him;
and all my sufferings have been trivial to
this. To be esteemed by him, to be
worthy his regard, and read his appro-
bation in his speaking eyes; this was
my support, this sustained me, nor suf-
fered my feet to strike against a stone
in this disfigured path of destruction.
He was my polar star. But he is gone,
and knows not how much I loved him.
I knew it not myself; else how could I
promise never to speak, never to think
of him again? But whence these wild
expressions?

expressions? Oh! pardon the effusions of phrenetic fancy. I know not what I have said. I am lost, lost!

J. S,

LETTER XXXIX.

To Colonel MONTAGUE.

CONGRATULATE me, my dear Jack, on having beat the Baron out of the pit. He is off, my boy! and now I may play a safer game; for, between ourselves, I have as much inclination to sleep in a whole skin, as somebody else you and I know of. I have really been more successful than I could have flattered myself I should be; but the devil still stands my friend, which is but grateful to be sure, as the devil is in it if one good turn does not deserve another; and I have helped his fable divinity to many a good jobb in my day. The summit of my wishes was to remove this troublesome fellow; but he has taken himself clean out of the kingdom, left the fame of his Dulcinea should

should suffer in the *Morning Post*. He, if any man could, would not scruple drubbing that *Hydra* of scandal; but then the stain would still remain where the blot had been made. I think you will be glad that he is punished at any rate for his impertinent interference in your late affair with the recruit's sweetheart. These delicate minds are ever contriving their own misery; and, from their exquisite sensibility, find out the method of refining on torture. Thus, in a fit of heroics, he has banished himself from the only woman he loves;—and who in a short time, unless my ammunition fails, or my mine springs, too soon he might have a chance of being happy with, was he cast in mortal mould.—But I take it, he is one of that sort which Madame Sevigné calls “a pumkin fried in snow,” or engendered between a Lapland sailor and a mermaid on the icy plains of Greenland. Even the charms of Julia can but just warm him. He does not burn like me. The consuming fire of Etna riots not in his veins, or he would have
lost

lost all consideration, but that of the completion of his wishes. Mine have become ten times more eager from the resistance I have met with. Fool that I was! not to be able to keep a rein over my transports, till I had extinguished the lights! but to see her before me, my pulse beating with tumultuous passion, and my villainous fancy anticipating the tempting scene, all conspired to give such spirit to my caresses, as ill-suited with the character I assumed of an indifferent husband. — Like *Calista* of old, she soon discovered the God under the semblance of Diana. Heavens! how she fired up, and like the leopard, appeared more beauteous when heightened by anger? But in vain, my pretty trembler, in vain you struggle in the toils; thy price is paid, and thou wilt soon be mine. Stanley has lost every thing to me but his property in his wife's person; and though perhaps he may make a few wry faces, he must digest that bitter pill. He has obliged her to give up all her jointure, so she has now no dependance.

What

What a fool he is! but he has ever been so; the most palpable cheat passes on him; and though he is morally certain, that to *play* and to *lose* is one and the same thing, yet nothing can cure his cursed itch of gaming. Notwithstanding all the *remonstrances* I have made, and the *dissuatives* I have daily used, he is bent upon his own destruction; and, since that is plainly the case, why may not I, and a few clever fellows like myself, take advantage of his egregious folly?

It was but yesterday I met him. "I am most consumedly in the flat key," Biddulph," said he; "I know not what to do with myself. For God's sake! let us have a little touch at billiards, picquet, or something, to drive the devil melancholy out of my citadel (touching his bosom), for, by my soul, I believe I shall make away with myself, if left to my own agreeable meditations." As usual, I advised him to reflect how much luck had run against him, and begged him to be cautious; that I positively had no pleasure

pleasure in playing with one who never turned a game; that I should look out for some one who understood billiards well enough to be my conqueror. "What the devil!" cried he, "you think me a novice; come, come, I will convince you, to your sorrow, I know something of the game; I'll bet you five hundred, Biddulph, that I pocket your ball in five minutes."

"You can't beat me," said I, "and I will give you three."

"I'll be damned if I accept three; no, no, let us play on the square." So to it we went; and as usual it ended. The more he loses, the more impetuous and eager he is to play.

There will be a confounded bustle soon; his uncle, old Stanley, is coming up to town. In disposing of his wife's jointure, part of which was connected with an estate of Squaretoes, the affair has consequently reached his ears, and he is all fury upon the occasion. I believe there has been a little chicanery practised between Sir William and his Lawyer, which will prove but an ugly

business. However, thanks to my foresight in these matters, I am out of the scrape; but I can see the Baronet is cursedly off the hooks from the idea of its transpiring, and had rather see the Devil than the Don. He has burnt his fingers, and smarts till he roars again. Adieu! dear Jack:

Remember thy old friend,

BIDDULPH.

LETTER XL.

To Miss GRENVILLE.

MY storm of grief is now a little appeased; and I think I ought to apologize to my dearest Louisa, for making her so free a participator of my phrenzy; yet I doubt not of your forgiveness on this, as well as many occasions, reflecting with the liveliest gratitude on the extreme tenderness you have ever shewn me.

The morning after I had written that incoherent letter to you, Miss Finch paid me a visit. She took no notice of the dejection

dejection of my countenance, which I am convinced was but too visible; but, putting on a chearful air, though I thought she too looked melancholy when she first came in, "I am come to tell you, my dear Lady Stanley," said she, "that you must go to Lady D—'s route this evening; you know you are engaged, and I design you for my *chaperon*." "Excuse me, my dear," returned I, "I cannot think of going thither, and was just going to send a card to that purpose."

"Lady Stanley," she replied, "you must go indeed. I have a very particular reason for urging you to make your appearance there." "And I have as particular a reason," said I, turning away my head to conceal a tear that would unbidden start in my eye, "to prevent my going there or any where else at present."

Her eyes were moistened; when, taking my hand in hers, and looking up in my face with the utmost friendliness, "My amiable Lady Stanley, it grieves my soul, to think any of the licentious

200 THE SYLPH.

“wretches in this town should dare af-
 “fect such excellence as yours; but
 “that infamous creature, Lady Anne,
 “said last night in the coffee-room at
 “the opera, that she had heard Lady
 “Stanley took to heart (was her ex-
 “pression) the departure of Baron
 “Ton-hausen; and that she and Miss
 “Finch had quarrelled about their
 “gallant. Believe me, I could sooner
 “have lost the power of speech, than
 “have communicated so disagreeable a
 “piece of intelligence to you, but that
 “I think it highly incumbent on you,
 “by appearing with cheerfulness in
 “public with me, to frustrate the ma-
 “levolence of that spiteful woman as
 “much as we both can.”

“What have I done to that vile
 “woman?” said I, giving a loose to my
 “tears; “In what have I injured her;
 “that she should thus seek to blacken
 “my fame?”

“Dared to be virtuous, while she is
 “infamous,” answered Miss Finch;—
 “but, however, my dear Lady Stanley,
 “you perceive the necessity of con-
 “tradiçing

“tradiſting her aſſertion of our having
 “quarrelled on any account; and no-
 “thing can ſo effectually do it as our
 “appearing together in good ſpirits.”

“Mine,” cried I, “are broken en-
 “tirely. I have no wiſh to wear the
 “ſemblance of pleaſure, while my
 “heart is bowed down with woe.”

“But we muſt do diſagreeable things
 “ſometimes to keep up appearances.
 “That vile woman, as you juſtly call
 “her, would be happy to have it in
 “her power to ſpread her calumny;
 “we may in part prevent it: beſides,
 “I promiſed the Baron I would not let
 “you ſit moping at home, but draw you
 “out into company, at the ſame time
 “giving you as much of mine as I could,
 “and as I found agreeable to you.”

“I beg you to be aſſured, my dear,
 “that the company of no one can be
 “more ſo than your’s. And, as I have
 “no doubts of your ſincere wiſh for my
 “welfare, I will readily ſubmit myſelf
 “to your diſcretion. But how ſhall I
 “be able to confront that infamous
 “Lady Anne, who will moſt probably

“be there?” “Never mind her; let
 “conscious merit support you. Reflect
 “on your own worth, nor cast one
 “thought on such a wretch. I will
 “dine with you; and in the evening we
 “will prepare for this visit.”

I made no enquiry why the Baron recommended me so strongly to Miss Finch. I thought such enquiry might lead us farther than was prudent; besides, I knew Miss Finch had a *tendre* for him, and therefore, through the course of the day, I never mentioned his name. Miss Finch was equally delicate as myself; our discourse then naturally fell on indifferent subjects; and I found I grew towards the evening much more composed than I had been for some time. The party was large; but, to avoid conversation as much as possible, I sat down to a quadrille table with Miss Finch; and, encouraged by her looks and smiles, which I believe the good girl forced into her countenance to give me spirits, I got through the evening tolerably well. The next morning, I walked with my friend into the
 Park.

Park. I never dine out, as I would wish always to be at home at meal times, lest Sir William should chuse to give me his company, but that is very seldom the case; and as to the evenings, I never see him, as he does not come home till three or four in the morning, and often stays out the whole night. We have of course separate apartments. Adieu, my beloved! Would to God I could fly into your arms, and there forget my sorrows!

Yours, most affectionately,

J. S.

LETTER XLI.

To Lord BIDDULPH.

FOR Heaven's sake, my dear Lord, let me see you instantly; or on second thoughts (though I am too much perplexed to be able to arrange them properly) I will lay before you the cursed difficulties with which I am surrounded, and then I shall beg the favour of you to go to Sir George Brudenel, and see

what you can do with him. Sure the devil owes me some heavy grudge; every thing goes against me. Old Stanley has rubbed through a damned fit of the gout. Oh! that I could kill him with a wish! I then should be a free man again.

You see I make no scruple of applying to you, relying firmly on your professions of friendship; and assure yourself I shall be most happy in subscribing to any terms that you may propose for your own security; for fourteen thousand six hundred pounds I must have by Friday, if I pawn my soul twenty times for the sum. If you don't assist me, I have but one other method (you understand me), though I should be unwilling to be driven to such a procedure. But I am (except my hopes in you) all despair.

Adieu!

W. STANLEY.

LET-

LETTER XLII.

Enclosed in the foregoing.

To Sir WILLIAM STANLEY.

Sir,

I AM extremely concerned, and as equally surprized, to find by my lawyer, that the Pemberton estate was not yours to dispose of. He tells me it is, after the death of your wife, the sole property of your uncle; Mr. Dawson (who is Mr. Stanley's lawyer) having clearly proved it to him by the deeds, which he swears he is possessed of. How then, Sir William, am I to reconcile this intelligence with the transactions between us? I have paid into your hands the sum of fourteen thousand six hundred pounds; and (I am sorry to write so harshly) have received a forged deed of conveyance. Mr. Dawson has assured Stevens, my lawyer, that his client never signed that conveyance. I should be very unwilling to bring you, or any gentleman, into such a delemma; but you may

suppose I should be as sorry to lose such a sum for nothing; nor, indeed, could I consent to injure my heirs by such a negligence. I hope it will suit you to replace the above sum in the hands of my banker, and I will not hesitate to conceal the writings now in my possession; but the money must be paid by Friday next. You will reflect on this maturely, as you must know in what a predicament you at present stand, and what must be the consequence of such an affair coming under the cognizance of the law.

I remain, Sir,

Your humble servant,

GEORGE BRUDENEL.

LETTER XLIII.

To Miss GRENVILLE.

I WRITE to you, my dearest Louisa, under the greatest agitation of spirits; and know no other method of quieting them, than communicating my griefs to you. But alas! how can you remedy

medy the evils of which I complain? or how shall I describe them to you? How many times I have repeated, *how hard is my fate!* Yes, Louisa! and I must still repeat the same. In short, what have I to trust to? I see nothing before me but the effects of deep despair. I tremble at every sound, and every footstep seems to be the harbinger of some disaster.

Sir William breakfasted with me this morning, the first time these three weeks I believe; a letter was brought him. He changed countenance on the perusal of it; and, starting up, traversed the room in great disorder. "Any ill news, Sir William?" I asked. He heeded me not, but rang the bell with violence. "Get the chariot ready directly—No, give me my hat and sword." Before they could be brought, he again changed his mind. He would then write a note. He took the standish, folded some paper, wrote, blotted, and tore many sheets, bit his lips, struck his forehead, and acted a thousand extravagances. I could con-

tain myself no longer. "Whatever
 "may be the consequence of your
 "anger, Sir William," said I, "I must
 "insist on knowing what sudden turn of
 "affairs has occasioned this present
 "distress. For Heaven's sake! do not
 "refuse to communicate your trouble.
 "I cannot support the agony your agi-
 "tation has thrown me into."

"And you would be less able to sup-
 "port it, were I to communicate it."

"If you have any pity for me," cried
 I, rising, and going up to him, "I
 "conjure you by that pity to disclose
 "the cause of your disorder. Were
 "I certain of being unable to bear the
 "shock, yet I would meet it with calm-
 "ness, rather than be thus kept in the
 "most dreadful suspense."

"Suffice it then," cried he, throwing
 out his arm, "I am ruined for ever."

"Ruined!" I repeated with faint
 voice.

"Yes!" he answered, starting on his
 feet, and muttering curses between his
 teeth. Then, after a fearful pause,
 "There

"There is but one way, but one way to
"escape this impending evil."

"Oh!" cried I, "may you fall on
"the right way! but, perhaps, things
"may not be so bad as you apprehend;
"you know I have valuable jewels; let
"me fetch them for you; the sale of
"them will produce a great deal of
"money."

"Jewels! O God! they are gone,
"you have no jewels."

"Indeed, my dear Sir William," I
replied, shocked to death at seeing the
deplorable way he was in; and fearing,
from his saying they were gone, that his
head was hurt—"Indeed, my dear Sir
"William, I have them in my own ca-
"binet," and immediately fetched them
to him. He snatched them out of my
hand, and, dashing them on the floor,
"Why do you bring me these damned
"baubles; your diamonds are gone;
"these are only paste."

"What do you mean?" I cried, all
astonishment, "I am sure they are such
"as I received them from you."

"I know

"I know it very well; but I sold them
"when you thought them new-set; and
"now I am more pushed than ever."

"They were your's, Sir William,"
said I, stifling my resentment, as I thought
he was now sufficiently punished, "you
"had therefore a right to dispose of
"them whenever you chose; and, had
"you made me the *confidante* of your
"intention, I should not have opposed
"it; I am only sorry you should have
"been so distressed as to have yielded
"to such a necessity, for tho' my confi-
"dence in you, and my ignorance in
"jewels, might prevent *my* knowing
"them to be counterfeits, yet, no doubt,
"every body who has seen me in them
"must have discovered their fallacy.
"How contemptible then have you made
"us appear!"

"Oh! for God's sake, let me hear no
"more about them; let them all go to
"the devil; I have things of more con-
"sequence to attend to." At this moment
a Mr. Brooksbank was announced. "By
"heaven," cried Sir William, "we are
"all undone! Brooksbank! blown to
"the

“the devil! Lady Stanley, you may retire to your own room; I have some business of a private nature with this gentleman.”

I obeyed, leaving my husband with this *gentleman*, whom I think the worst looking fellow I ever saw in my life, and retired to my own apartment to give vent to the sorrow which flowed in on every side. “Oh! good God!” I cried, bursting into floods of tears, “what a change eighteen months has made! A princely fortune dissipated, and a man of honour, at least one who appeared as such, reduced to the poor subterfuge of stealing his wife’s jewels, to pay gaming debts, and support kept mistresses!” These were my sad and solitary reflections. What a wretched hand has he made of it! and how deplorable is my situation! Alas! to what resource can he next fly! What is to become of us! I have no claim to any farther bounty from my own family; like the prodigal son, I have received my portion; and although I have not been the squanderer, yet it is all gone, and I may
be

be reduced to feed on the husks of acorns; at least, I am sure I eat bitter herbs. Surely, I am visited with these calamities for the sins of my grandfather! May they soon be expiated!

* * * * *

That wretch Lord Biddulph has been here, and, after some conversation, he has taken Sir William out in his chariot. Thank heaven, I saw him not; but Win brought me this intelligence. I would send for Miss Finch, to afford me a little consolation; but she is confined at home by a feverish complaint. I cannot think of going out while things are in this state; so I literally seem a prisoner in my own house. Oh! that I had never, never seen it! Adieu! Adieu!

J. S.

LETTER XLIV.

To Col. MONTAGUE.

I Acquainted you, some time since, of Stanley's affairs being quite *derangé*, and that he had practised an unsuccessful

manœuvre

manœuvre on Brudenel. A pretty piece of business he has made of it, and his worship stands a fair chance of swinging for forgery, unless I contribute my assistance to extricate him, by enabling him to replace the money. As to raising any in the ordinary way, it is not in his power, as all his estates are settled on old Stanley, he (Sir William) having no children; and he is inexorable. There may be something to be said in the old fellow's favour too; he has advanced thousand after thousand, till he is tired out, for giving him money is really only throwing water into a sieve.

In consequence of a hasty letter written by the Baronet, begging me to use all my interest with Brudenel, I thought it the better way to wait on Stanley myself, and talk the affair over with him, and, as he had promised to subscribe to any terms for my security, to make these terms most pleasing to myself. Besides, I confess, I was unwilling to meet Sir George about such a black piece of business, not chusing likewise to subject myself to the censures of that puritanic mortal,

mortal, for having drawn Stanley into a love of play. I found Sir William under the greatest disorder of spirits; Brooksbank was with him; that fellow carries his conscience in his face; he is the portrait of villainy and turpitude. "For God's sake! my lord," cried Sir William (this you know being his usual exclamation), "what is to be done in this cursed affair? All my hopes are fixed on the assistance you have promised me."

"Why, faith, Sir William," I answered, "it is as you say, a most cursed unlucky affair. I think Brooksbank has not acted with his accustomed caution. As to what assistance I can afford you, you may firmly rely on, but I had a confounded tumble last night after you left us; by the bye, you was out of luck in absenting yourself; there was a great deal done; I lost upwards of seventeen thousand to the young Cub in less than an hour, and nine to the Count; so that I am a little out of elbows, which happens very unfortunate at this critical time."

"Then

"Then I am ruined for ever!" "No,
"no, not so bad neither, I dare say.
"What say you to Lady Stanley's dia-
"monds, they are valuable."

"O Christ! they are gone long ago.
"I told her, I thought they wanted new-
"setting, and supplied her with paste,
"which she knew nothing of till this
"morning that she offered them to me."
(All this I knew very well, for D——
the jeweller told me so, but I did not
chuse to inform his worship so much.)
"You have a large quantity of plate."
"All melted, my lord, but one service,
"and that I have borrowed money on."
"Well, I have something more to offer;
"but, if you please, we will dismiss
"Mr. Brooksbank. I dare say he has
"other business." He took the hint, and
left us to ourselves.

When we were alone, I drew my chair
close to him; he was leaning his head
on his hand, which rested on the table,
in a most melancholy posture. "Stanley,"
said I, "what I am now going to say is
"a matter entirely between ourselves.
"You are no stranger to the passion I
"have

"have long entertained for your wife,
 "and from your shewing no resentment
 "for what I termed a frolic on the night
 "of the masquerade, I have reason to
 "believe, you will not be mortally
 "offended at this my open avowal of my
 "attachment. Hear me (for he changed
 "his position, and seemed going to speak):
 "I adore Lady Stanley; I have re-
 "peatedly assured her of the violence of
 "my flame, but have ever met with the
 "utmost coldness on her side; let me,
 "however, have your permission, I will
 "yet insure myself success." "What,
 "Biddulph! consent to my own disho-
 "nour! What do you take me for?"
 "What do I take you for?" cried I, with
 a smile, in which I infused a proper de-
 gree of contempt. "What will Sir
 "George Brudenel take you for, you
 "mean." "Curfes, everlasting curfes,
 "blast me for my damned love of play!
 "that has been my bane." "And I
 "offer you your cure."

"The remedy is worse than the dis-
 "ease."

"Then

"Then submit to the disease, and
"sink under it. Sir William, your hum-
"ble servant," cried I, rising as if
to go.

"Biddulph, my dear Biddulph," cried
he, catching my hand, and grasping it
with dying energy, "what are you about
"to do? You surely will not leave me in
"this damned exigency? Think of my
"situation! I have parted with every
"means of raising more money, and
"eternal infamy will be the consequence
"of this last cursed subterfuge of mine
"transpiring. Oh, my God! how sunk
"am I! And will you not hold out your
"friendly arm?"

"I have already offered you propo-
"sals," I replied with an affected cold-
ness, "which you do not think proper
"to accede to."

"Would you consign me to everlast-
"ing perdition?"

"Will you make no sacrifice to extri-
"cate yourself?"

"Yes; my life."

"What, at Tyburn?"

"Dam-

"Dam—n on the thought! Oh!
 "Biddulph, are there no other means?
 "Reflect—the honour of my injured
 "wife!" "Will not *that* suffer by
 "your undergoing an ignominious death?"
 "Ah! why do you thus stretch my
 "heart-strings? Julia is virtuous, and
 "deserves a better fate than she has met
 "with in me. What a wretch must that
 "man be, who will consign his wife to
 "infamy! No; sunk, lost, and ruined as
 "I am, I cannot yield to such baseness;
 "I should be doubly damned."

"You know your own conscience best,
 "and how much it will bear; I did not
 "use to think you so scrupulous; what
 "I offer is as much for your advantage
 "as my own; nay, faith, for your ad-
 "vantage solely, as I may have a very
 "good chance of succeeding with her bye
 "and bye, when you can reap no benefit
 "from it. All I ask of you is, your per-
 "mission to give you an opportunity of
 "suing for a divorce. Lay your da-
 "mages as high as you please, I will
 "agree to any thing; and, as an ear-
 "nest, will raise this sum which distresses

"you

" you so much ; I am not tied down as
 " you are ; I can mortgage any part of
 " my estate. What do you say ? Will
 " you sign a paper, making over all
 " right and title to your wife in my fa-
 " vour ? There is no time to be lost, I
 " can assure you. Your uncle Stanley's
 " lawyer has been with Brudenel ; you
 " know what hopes you have from that
 " quarter ; for the sooner you are out of
 " the way, the better for the next heir."

You never saw a poor devil so dis-
 tressed and agitated as Stanley was ; he
 shook like one under a fit of the tertian-
 ague. I used every argument I could
 muster up, and conjured all the horrible
 ideas which were likely to terrify a man
 of his cast ; threatened, soothed, sneered :
 in short, I at last gained my point, and
 he signed a commission for his own
 cuckoldom ; which that I may be able
 to atchieve soon, dear Venus grant ! I
 took him with me to consult with our
 broker about raising the money. In the
 evening I intend my visit to the lovely
 Julia. Oh ! that I may be endued with
 sufficient eloquence to soften her gentle
 heart,

heart, and tune it to the sweetest notes of love ! But she is virtuous, as Stanley says ; that she is most truly : yet who knows how far resentment against her brutal husband may induce her to go ? If ever woman had provocation, she certainly has. O that she may be inclined to revenge herself on him for his baseness to her ! and that I may be the happy instrument of effecting it !

“ Gods ! what a thought is there ! ”

Adieu !

BIDDULPH.

LETTER XLV.

To Miss GRENVILLE.

OH ! my Louisa, what will now become of your wretched sister ? Surely the wide world contains not so forlorn a wretch, who has not been guilty of any crime ! But let me not keep you in suspense. In the afternoon of the day I wrote last (I told you Miss Finch was ill)—Oh ! good God ! I know not what I write. I thought I would go and see her for an hour or two. I ordered

dered the coach, and was just stepping into it, when an ill-looking man (Lord bless me! I have seen none else lately) laid hold of my arm, saying, "Madam, "you must not go into that carriage."

"What do you mean?" I asked with a voice of terror, thinking he was a madman.

"Nothing, my lady," he answered, "but an execution on Sir William."

"An execution! Oh, heavens! what execution?" I was breathless, and just fainting.

"They are bailiffs, my lady," said one of our servants: "my master is arrested for debt, and these men will seize every thing in the house; but you need not be terrified, your ladyship is safe, they cannot touch you."

I ran back into the house with the utmost precipitation; all the servants seemed in commotion. I saw Preston; she was running up-stairs with a bundle in her hand. "Preston," said I, "what are you about?" "Oh! the bailiffs, the bailiffs, my lady!"

"They won't hurt you; I want you here."

"I can't come, indeed, my lady, till I have disposed of these things; I must throw them out of the window, or the bailiffs will seize them."

I could not get a servant near me but my faithful Win, who hung weeping round me; as for myself, I was too much agitated to shed a tear, or appear sensible of my misfortune.

Two of these horrid men came into the room. I demanded what they wanted. To see that none of the goods were carried out of the house, they answered. I asked them, if they knew where Sir William Stanley was. "Oh! he is safe enough," said one of them; "we can't touch him; he pleads privilege, as being a member of parliament; we can only take care of his furniture for him."

"And am I not allowed the same privilege? If so, how have you dared to detain me?"

"Detain you! why I hope your ladyship will not say as how we have offered

"offered to detain you? You may go where you please, provided you take nothing away with you."

"My lady was going out," said Win, sobbing, "and you would not suffer it."

"Not in that coach, mistress, to be sure; but don't go for to say we stopped your lady. She may go when she will."

"Will one of you order me a chair or hackney coach? I have no business here." The last word melted me; and I sunk into a chair, giving way to a copious flood of tears. At that instant almost the detestable Biddulph entered the room. I started up—"Whence this intrusion, my lord?" I asked with a haughty tone. "Are you come to join your *insults* with the misfortunes you have in great measure effected?"

"I take heaven to witness," answered he, "how much I was shocked to find an extent in your house; I had not the least idea of such a circumstance happening. I, indeed, knew that Sir William was very much straitened for money."

“Accursed be those,” interrupted I,
 “ever accursed be those whose pernicious
 “councils and baleful examples
 “have brought him into these exigencies.
 “I look on you, my lord, as one cruel
 “cause of the ruin of our house.”

“Rather, Lady Stanley, call me the
 “prop of your sinking house. View, in
 “me, one who would die to render you
 “service.”

“Would to heaven you had done so
 “long—long before I had seen you!”

“How unkind is that wish! I came,
 “madam, with the intention of being
 “serviceable to you. Do not then put
 “such hard constructions on my words.
 “I wished to consult with you on the
 “most efficacious means to be used for
 “Sir William’s emolument. You know
 “not what power you have!”

“Power! alas! what power have I?”

“The most unlimited,” he replied,
 fixing his odious eyes on my face,
 which I returned by a look of the utmost
 scorn. “O Lady Stanley,” he continued,
 “do not—do not, I intreat you,
 “use

"use me so hardly. Will you allow me
"to speak to you alone?"

"By no means."

"For God's sake do! Your servant
"shall remain in the next room, within
"your call. Let me beseech you to place
"some confidence in me. I have that to
"relate concerning Sir William, which
"you would not chuse a domestic should
"hear. Dearest Lady Stanley, be not in-
"exorable."

"You may go into that room, Win,"
said I, not deigning to answer this impor-
tunate man. "My lord," addressing my-
self to him, "you can have nothing to
"tell me to which I am a stranger; I
"know Sir William is totally ruined.
"This is known to every servant in the
"house."

"Believe me," said he, "the execu-
"tion is the least part of the evil. That
"event happens daily among the great
"people: but there is an affair of ano-
"ther nature, the stain of which can
"never be wiped off. Sir William, by
"his necessities, has been plunged into
"the utmost difficulties, and, to ex-

"tricate himself, has used some unlawful means; in a word, he has committed a forgery."

"Impossible!" cried I, clasping my hands together in agony.

"It is too true; Sir George Brudenel has the forged deed now in his hands, and nothing can save him from an ignominious death, but the raising a large sum of money, which is quite out of his power. Indeed, I might with some difficulty assist him."

"And will you not step forth to save him?" I asked with precipitation.

"What would *you* do to save him?" he asked in his turn, attempting to take my hand.

"Can you ask me such a question? To save his life, what would I not do?"

"You have the means in your power."

"Oh! name them quickly, and ease my heart of this load of distraction! It is more—much more than I can bear."

"Oh!"

"Oh! my lovely angel!" cried the horrid wretch, "would you but shew some tenderness to me! would you but listen to the most faithful, most enamoured of men, much might be done. You would, by your sweet condescension, bind me for ever to your interest, might I but flatter myself I should share your affection. Would you but give me the slightest mark of it, oh! how bliss I should be! Say, my adorable Julia, can I ever hope to touch your heart?"

"Wretch!" cried I, "unhand me. How dare you have the insolence to affront me again with the mention of your hateful passion? I believe all you have uttered to be a base falsehood against Sir William. You have taken an opportunity to insult his wife, at a time when you think him too much engaged to seek vengeance; otherwise your coward soul would shrink from the just resentment you ought to expect!"

"I am no coward, madam," he replied, "but in my fears of offending

“the only woman on whom my soul
 “doats, and the only one whose scorn
 “would wound me. I am not afraid of
 “Sir William’s resentment—I act but by
 “his consent.”

“By his consent!”

“Yes, my dear creature, by his.
 “Come, I know you to be a woman of
 “sense; you are acquainted with your
 “husband’s hand-writing, I presume.
 “I have not committed a *forgery*, I assure
 “you. Look, madam, on this paper;
 “you will see how much I need dread
 “the just vengeance of an injured hus-
 “band, when I have his especial man-
 “date to take possession as soon as I
 “can gain my lovely charmer’s consent;
 “and, oh! may just revenge inspire you
 “to reward my labours!” He held a
 paper towards me; I attempted to snatch
 it out of his hand. “Not so, my sweet
 “angel, I cannot part with it; but you
 “shall see the contents of it with all my
 “heart.”

Oh! Louisa, do I live to tell you what
 were those contents!—“I resign all right
 “and title to my wife, Julia Stanley, to
 “Lord

" Lord Biddulph, on condition that he
 " pays into my hands the sum of four-
 " teen thousand six hundred pounds,
 " which he enters into an engagement
 " to perform. Witness my hand,

" WILLIAM STANLEY."

Grief, resentment, and amazement,
 • struck me dumb. " What say you to
 " this, Lady Stanley? Should you not
 " pique yourself on your fidelity to such
 " a good husband, who takes so much
 " care of you? You see how much he
 " prizes his life."

" Peace, monster! peace!" cried I.
 " You have taken a base, most base ad-
 " vantage of the wretch you have
 " undone!"

" The fault is all your's; the cruelty
 " with which you have treated me has
 " driven me to the only course left of
 " obtaining you. You have it in your
 " power to save or condemn your hus-
 " band."

" What, should I barter my soul to
 " save *one* so profligate of his? But there
 " are other resources yet left, and we

yet to return off G. 5. " yet

"yet may triumph over thee, thou cruel,
 "worst of wretches!"

"Perhaps you may think there are
 "hopes from old Stanley; there can be
 "none, as he has caused this execution.
 "It would half ruin your family to raise
 "this sum, as there are many more
 "debts which they would be called
 "upon to pay. Why then will you put
 "it out of my power to extricate him?
 "Let me have some influence over you!
 "On my knees I intreat you to hear me.
 "I swear by the great God that made
 "me, I will marry you as soon as a di-
 "vorce can be obtained. I have sworn
 "the same to Sir William."

Think, my dearest Louisa, what a
 situation this was for me! I was con-
 strained to rein-in my resentment, lest I
 should irritate this wretch to some act of
 violence—for I had but too much reason
 to believe I was wholly in his power.
 I had my senses sufficiently collected (for
 which I owe my thanks to heaven) to make
 a clear retrospect of my forlorn condi-
 tion—eight or ten strange fellows in the
 house, who, from the nature of their pro-

profession, must be hardened against every distress, and, perhaps, ready to join with the hand of oppression in injuring the unfortunate—my servants (in none of whom I could confide) most of them employed in protecting, what they styled, their own property; and either totally regardless of me, or, what I more feared, might unite with this my chief enemy in my destruction. As to the forgery, though the bare surmise threw me into agonies, I rather thought it a proof how far the vile Biddulph would proceed to terrify me, than reality; but the fatal paper signed by Sir William—that was too evident to be disputed. This conflict of thought employed every faculty, and left me speechless—Biddulph was still on his knees, “For heaven’s sake,” cried he, “do not treat me with this scorn; make me not desperate! Ardent as my passion is, I would not lose sight of my respect for you.”

“That you have already done,” I answered, “in thus openly avowing a passion, to me so highly disagreeable.

"Prove your respect, my lord, by quitting so unbecoming a posture, and leave the most unfortunate of women to her destiny."

"Take care, take care, madam," cried he, "how you drive me to despair; I have long, long adored you. My perseverance, notwithstanding your frowns, calls for some reward; and unless you assure me that in a future day you will not be thus unkind, I shall not easily forego the opportunity which now offers."

"For mercy's sake!" exclaimed I, starting up, "what do you mean? Lord Biddulph! How dare—I insist, Sir—leave me." I burst into tears, and, throwing myself again in my chair, gave free vent to all the anguish of my soul. He seemed moved. Again he knelt, and implored my pardon—"Forgive me—Oh! forgive me, thou sweet excellence! I will not hereafter offend, if it is in nature to suppress the extreme violence of my love. You know not how extensive your sway is over my soul! Indeed you do not?"

"On

“ On the condition of your leaving
 “ me directly, I will endeavour to for-
 “ give and forget what has passed.” I
 sobbed out, for my heart was too full of
 grief to articulate clearly.

“ Urge me not to leave you, my an-
 “ gelic creature. Ah! seek not to drive
 “ the man from your presence, who
 “ doats, doats on you to distraction.
 “ Think what a villain your husband is;
 “ think into what accumulated distress
 “ he has plunged you. Behold, in me,
 “ one who will extricate you from all
 “ your difficulties; who will raise you
 “ to rank, title, and honour; one
 “ whom you may make a convert. Oh!
 “ that I had met with you before this
 “ cursed engagement, I should have
 “ been the most blest of men. No vile
 “ passion would have interfered to sever
 “ my heart from my beauteous wife; in
 “ her soft arms I should have found a
 “ balm for all the disquietudes of the
 “ world, and learnt to despise all its empty
 “ delusive joys in the solid bliss of being
 “ good and happy!” This fine ha-
 rangue had no weight with me, though
 I thought

I thought it convenient he should think I was moved by it. "Alas! my Lord," said I, "it is now too late to indulge these ideas. I am doomed to be wretched; and my wretchedness feels increase, if I am the cause of making any earthly being so; yet, if you have the tenderness for me you express, you must participate of my deep affliction. Ask your own heart, if a breast, torn with anguish and sorrow, as mine is, can at present admit a thought of any other sentiment than the grief so melancholy a situation excites? In pity, therefore, to the woman you profess to love, leave me for this time. I said, I would forgive and forget; your compliance with my request may do more; it certainly will make me grateful."

"Dearest of all creatures," cried he, seizing my hand, and pressing it with rapture to his bosom, "Dearest, best of women! what is there that I could refuse you? Oh nothing, nothing; my soul is devoted to you. But why leave you? Why may I not this moment

"ment reap the advantage of your
"yielding heart?"

"Away! away, my Lord," cried I,
pushing him from me, "you promised
"to restrain your passion; why then is
"it thus boundless? Intitle yourself to
"my consideration, before you thus
"demand returns."

"I make no demands. I have done.
"But I flattered myself I read your soft
"wishes in your lovely eyes." [Detesta-
ble wretch! how my soul rose up
against him! but fear restrained my
tongue.] "But tell me, my adorable
"angel, if I tear myself from you now,
"when shall I be so happy as to behold
"you again?"

"To-morrow," I answered; "I shall
"be in more composed spirits to-mor-
"row, and then I will see you here;
"but do not expect too much. And
"now leave me this moment, as I have
"said more than I ought."

"I obey, dearest Julia," cried the
insolent creature, "I obey." And,
blessed be Heaven! he left the room. I
sprung to the door, and double-locked

it;

it; then called Win into the room, who had heard the whole of this conversation. The poor soul was as pale as ashes; her looks were contagious; I caught the infection; and, forgetting the distance betwixt us (but misery makes us all equal), I threw my arms round her, and shed floods of tears into her faithful bosom. When my storms of grief had a little subsided, or indeed when nature had exhausted her store, I became more calm, and had it in my power to consider what steps I should take, as you may believe I had nothing further from my intention than meeting this vile man again. I soon came to the determination to send to Miss Finch, as there was no one to whom I could apply for an asylum; I mean, for the present, as I am convinced I shall find the properest and most welcome in yours and my dear father's arms bye and bye. I rang the bell; one of the horrid bailiffs came for my orders. I desired to have Griffith called to me. I wrote a note to Miss Finch, telling her in a few words the situation of my affairs, and that my
dread:

dread was so great of receiving further insult from Lord Biddulph, that I could not support the idea of passing the night surrounded by such wretches; therefore intreated her to send some one in whom she could confide, in her carriage, to convey me to her for a little time till I could hear from my friends. In a quarter of an hour Griffith returned, with a billet containing only three lines—but oh, how much comfort. “My
 “dearest creature, my heart bleeds for
 “your distresses; there is no one so
 “proper as your true friend to convey
 “you hither. I will be with you in
 “an instant; yours, for ever, Maria
 “Finch.”

I made Win bundle up a few night-cloaths and trifles that we both might want, and in a short time I found myself pressed to the bosom of my dear Maria. She had risen from her bed, where she had lain two days, to fly to my succour. Ah! how much am I indebted to her! By Miss Finch's advice, I wrote a few words to—oh! what shall I call him?—the man, my Louisa, who
 tore

tore me from the fostering bosom of my beloved father, to abandon me to the miseries and infamy of the world! I wrote thus :

“ Abandoned and forsaken by him
 “ to whom I alone ought to look up for
 “ protection, I am (though, alas! un-
 “ able) obliged to be the guardian of my
 “ own honour. I have left your house;
 “ happy, happy had it been for me,
 “ never to have entered it! I seek that
 “ asylum from strangers, I can no longer
 “ meet with from my husband. I have
 “ suffered too much from my fatal con-
 “ nexion with you, to feel disposed
 “ to consign myself to everlasting in-
 “ famy (notwithstanding I have your
 “ permission), to extricate you from a
 “ trivial inconvenience. Remember,
 “ this is the first instance in which I
 “ ever disobeyed your will. May you
 “ see your error, reform, and be happy!
 “ So prays your much injured, but still
 “ faithful wife,

“ JULIA STANLEY.”

Miss Finch, with the goodness of an angel, took me home with her; nor
 would

would she leave me a moment to myself. She has indulged me with permission to write this account, to save me the trouble of repeating it to her. And now, my Louisa, and you, my dear honoured father, will you receive your poor wanderer? Will you heal her heart-rending sorrows, and suffer her to seek for happiness, at least a restoration of ease, in your tender bosom? Will you hush her cares, and teach her to kiss the hand which chastises her? Oh! how I long to pour forth my soul into the breast from whence I expect to derive all my earthly comfort!

Adieu!

J. S.

LETTER XLVI.

To Colonel MONTAGUE.

WELL, Jack, we are all *entrain*. I believe we shall do in time. But old Squaretoes has stole a march on us, and took out an extent against his nephew. Did you ever hear of so unnatural

natural a dog? It is true he has done a great deal for Sir William; and saw plainly, the more money he paid, the more extravagant his nephew grew; but still it was a damned affair too after all. I have been with my dear bewitching charmer. I have her promise to admit me as a visitor to-morrow. I was a fool not to finish the business to-night, as I could have bribed every one in the house to assist me. Your bailiffs are proper fellows for the purpose—but I love to have my adorables meet me—*almost* half way. I shall, I hope, gain her at last; and my victory will be a reward for all my pains and labours.

I am interrupted. A messenger from Sir William. I must go instantly to the Thatched-house tavern. What is in the wind now, I wonder?

* * * * *

Great God! Montague, what a fight have I been witness to! Stanley, the ill-fated Stanley, has shot himself. The horror of the scene will never be worn from my memory. I see his mangled corse staring ghastly upon me. I tremble.

ble. Every nerve is affected. I cannot at present give you the horrid particulars. I am more shocked than it is possible to conceive. Would to Heaven I had had no connexion with him! Oh! could I have foreseen this unhappy event! but it is too, too late. The undone self-destroyed wretch is gone to answer for his crimes; and you and I are left to deplore the part we have had in corrupting his morals, and leading him on, step by step, to destruction.

My mind is a hell—I cannot reflect—I feel all despair and self-abasement. I now thank God, I have not the weight of Lady Stanley's seduction on my already over-burdened conscience.

* * * * *

In what a different style I began this letter—with a pulse beating with anticipated evil, and my blood rioting in the idea of my fancied triumph over the virtue of the best and most injured of women. On the summons, I flew to the Thatched-house. The waiter begged me to go up stairs. "Here has a most
"unfortunate accident happened, my
" Lord.

" Lord. Poor Sir William Stanley has
 " committed a rash action; I fear his
 " life is in danger." I thought he al-
 luded to the affair of forgery, and in
 that persuasion made answer, " It is
 " an ugly affair, to be sure; but, as to
 " his life, that will be in no danger."
 " Oh! my Lord, I must not flatter you;
 " the surgeon declares he can live but a
 " few hours." " Live! what do you
 " say?" " He has shot himself, my
 " Lord." I hardly know how I got up
 stairs; but how great was my horror at
 the scene which presented itself to my
 affrighted view! Sir George Brudenel
 and Mr. Stanley were supporting him.
 He was not quite dead, but his last mo-
 ments were on the close. Oh! the oc-
 currences of life will never for one in-
 stant obliterate from my recollection the
 look which he gave me. He was speech-
 less; but his eloquent silence conveyed,
 in one glance of agony and despair,
 sentiments that sunk deep on my
 wounded conscience. His eyes were
 turned on *me*, when the hand of death
 sealed them for ever. I had thrown
 myself

myself on my knees by him, and was pressing his hand. I did not utter a word, indeed I was incapable of articulating a syllable. He had just sense remaining to know me, and I thought strove to withdraw his hand from mine. I let it go; and, seeing it fall almost lifeless, Mr. Stanley took it in his, as well as he could; the expiring man grasped his uncle's hand, and sunk into the shades of everlasting night. When we were convinced that all was over with the unhappy creature, we left the room. Neither Sir George, nor Mr. Stanley, seemed inclined to enter into conversation; and my heart ran over plentifully at my eyes. I gave myself up to my agonizing sorrow for some time. When I was a little recovered, I enquired of the people of the house, how this fatal event happened. Tom said, Sir William came there about seven o'clock, and went up stairs in the room we usually played in; that he looked very dejected, but called for coffee, and drank two dishes. He went from thence in an hour, and returned again about ten.

He

He walked about the room in great disorder. In a short space, Sir George Brudenel and Mr. Stanley came and asked for him. On carrying up their message, Sir William desired to be excused seeing them for half an hour. Within that time, a note was brought him from his own house by Griffith, Lady Stanley's servant*. His countenance changed on the perusal of it. "This then decides it," he exclaimed aloud. "I am now determined." He bade the waiter leave the room, and bring him no more messages. In obedience to his commands, Tom was going down stairs. Sir William shut the door after him hastily, and locked it; and before Tom had got to the passage, he heard the report of a pistol. Alarmed at the sound, and the previous disorder of Sir William, he ran into the room where were Brudenel and Stanley, entreating them for God's sake to go up, as he feared Sir William meant to do some desperate act. They ran up with

* The billet which Lady Stanley wrote, previous to her quitting her husband's house.

the utmost precipitation, and Brudenel burst open the door. The self-devoted victim was in an arm chair, hanging over on one side, his right cheek and ear torn almost off, and speechless. He expressed great horror, and, they think, contrition, in his looks; and once clasped his hands together, and turned up his eyes to Heaven. He knew both the gentlemen. His uncle was in the utmost agitation. "Oh! my dear Will," said he, "had you been less precipitate, "we might have remedied all these "evils." Poor Stanley fixed his eyes on him, and faintly shook his head. Sir George too pressed his hand, saying, "My dear Stanley, you have been deceived, if you thought me your "enemy. God forgive those who have "brought you to this distress!" This (with the truest remorse of conscience, I say) bears hard on my character. I did all in my power to prevent poor Stanley's meeting with Sir George and his uncle, and laboured, with the utmost celerity, to confirm him in the idea,

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that they were both inexorable, to further my schemes on his wife. As I found my company was not acceptable to the gentlemen, I returned home under the most violent dejection of spirits. Would to Heaven you were here! Yet, what consolation could you afford me? I rather fear you would add to the weight, instead of lightening it, as you could not speak peace to my mind, which is inconceivably hurt.

I am yours,

BIDDULPH.

LETTER XLVII.

To Miss GRENVILLE.

Dear Madam,

A LETTER from Mr. Stanley *, which accompanies this, will inform you of the fatal catastrophe of the

* Mr. Stanley's letter is omitted.

unfortunate

unfortunate Sir William Stanley. Do me the justice to believe I shall with pleasure contribute all in my power to the ease and convenience of Lady Stanley, for whom I have the tenderest friendship.

We have concealed the whole of the shocking particulars of her husband's fate from her ladyship, but her apprehensions lead her to surmise the worst. She is at present too much indisposed, to undertake a journey into Wales; but, as soon as she is able to travel, I shall do myself the honour of conveying her to the arms of relations so deservedly dear to her.

Mr. Stanley is not a man who deals in professions; he therefore may have been silent as to his intentions in favour of his niece, which I know to be very noble.

Lady Stanley tells me, she has done me the honour of mentioning my name frequently in her correspondence with you. As a sister of so amiable a woman, I feel myself attached to Miss Grenville,

and beg leave to subscribe myself her
obliged humble servant,

MARIA FINCH.

LETTER XLVHI.

From the SYLPH.

THE vicissitudes which you, my
Julia, have experienced in your
short life, must teach you how little de-
pendence is to be placed in sublunary
enjoyments. By an inevitable stroke,
you are again cast under the protection
of your first friends. If, in the vortex
of folly where late you resided, my
councils preserved you from falling into
any of its snares, the reflection of being
so happy an instrument will shorten the
dreary path of life, and smooth the
pillow of death. But my task, my
happy task, of superintending your
footsteps is now over.

In

In the peaceful vale of innocence, no guide is necessary; for there all is virtuous, all beneficent, as yourself. You have passed many distressing and trying scenes. But, however, never let despair take place in your bosom. To hope to be happy in this world, may be presumptuous; to despair of being so, is certainly impious; and, though the sun may rise and see us unblest, and, setting, leave us in misery; yet, on its return, it may behold us changed, and the face which yesterday was clouded with tears may to-morrow brighten into smiles. Ignorant as we are of the events of to-morrow, let us not arrogantly suppose there will be no end to the trouble which now surrounds us; and, by murmuring, arraign the hand of Providence.

There may be, to us finite beings, many seeming contradictions of the assertion, that, *to be good is to be happy*; but an infinite Being knows it to be true in the enlarged view of things, and therefore implanted in

our breasts the love of virtue. Our merit may not, indeed, meet with the reward which we seem to claim in this life; but we are morally ascertained of reaping a plentiful harvest in the next. Persevere then, my amiable pupil, in the path you were formed to tread in, and rest assured, though a slow, a lasting recompence will succeed. May you meet with all the happiness you deserve in this world! and may those most dear to you be the dispensers of it to you! Should any future occasion of your life make it necessary to consult me, you know how a letter will reach me; till then adieu!

Ever your faithful

SYLPH.

LET-

LETTER XLIX.

TO SIR GEORGE BRUDENEL.

Woodley vale.

My dear Sir George,

IT is with the utmost pleasure, I assure you of my niece having borne her journey with less fatigue than we even could have hoped for. The pleasing expectation of meeting with her beloved relations contributed towards her support, and combated the afflictions she had tasted during her separation from them and her native place. As we approached the last stage, her conflict increased, and both Miss Finch and myself used every method to re-compose her fluttered spirits; but, just as we were driving into the inn-yard where we were to change horses for the last time, she clasped her hands together, exclaiming, "Oh my God! my father's

H 4

"chaife!"

“chaise!” and sunk back, very near fainting. I tried to laugh her out of her extreme agitation. She had hardly power to get out of the coach; and, hobbling as you know me to be with the gout, an extraordinary exertion was necessary on my part to support her, tottering as she was, into a parlour. I shall never be able to do justice to the scene which presented itself. Miss Grenville flew to meet her trembling sister. The mute expression of their features, the joy of meeting, the recollection of past sorrows, oh! it is more than my pen can paint; it was more than human nature could support; at least, it was with the utmost difficulty it could be supported till the venerable father approached to welcome his lovely daughter. She sunk on her knees before him, and looked like a dying victim at the shrine of a much-loved saint. What agonies possessed Mr. Grenville! He called for assistance; none of the party were able, from their own emotions, to afford him any. At last the dear creature

ture recovered, and became tolerably calm; but this only lasted a few minutes. She was seated between her father and sister; she gazed fondly first on one, and then the other, and would attempt to speak; but her full heart could not find vent at her lips; her eyes were rivers, through which her sorrows flowed. I rose to retire for a little time, being overcome by the affecting view. She saw my intentions, and, rising likewise, took my hand—"Don't leave us—" "I will be more myself—Don't leave us, my second father!—Oh! Sir," turning to Mr. Grenville, help me to "repay this generous, best of men, a small part of what my grateful heart tells me is his due." "I receive him, my Julia," cried her father, "I receive him to my bosom as my brother." He embraced me, and Lady Stanley threw an arm over each of our shoulders. Our spirits, after some time, a little subsided, and we proceeded to this place. I was happy this meeting was over, as I all along dreaded the delicate sensibility of my niece.

Oh! Sir George! how could my unhappy nephew be blind to such estimable qualities as Julia possesses? Blind!—I recall the word: he was not blind to them; he could not, but he was misled by the cursed follies of the world, and entangled by its snares, till he lost all relish for whatever was lovely and virtuous. Ill-fated young man! how deplorable was thy end! Oh! may the mercy of Heaven be extended towards thee! May it forget its justice, *nor be extreme to mark what was done amiss!*

I find Julia was convinced he was hurried out of this life by his own desperate act, but she forbears to enquire into what she says she dreads to be informed. She appears to me (who knew her not in her happier days) like a beautiful plant that had been chilled with a nipping frost, which congealed, but could not destroy, its loveliness; the tenderness of her parent, like the sun, has chased away the winter, and she daily expands and discovers fresh charms. Her sister too—indeed we should see such women

women now and then, to reconcile us to the trifling sex, who have laboured with the utmost celerity, and with too much success, to bring an odium on that most beautiful part of the creation. You say you are tired of the women of your world. Their caprices, their follies, to soften the expression, has caused this distaste in you. Come to Woodley-vale, and behold beauty ever attended (by what should ever attend beauty) native innocence. The lovely widow is out of the question. I am in love with her myself, that is, as much as an old fellow of sixty-four ought to be with a young girl of nineteen; but her charming sister, I must bring you acquainted with her; yet, unless I was perfectly convinced, that you possess the best of hearts, you should not even have a glance from her pretty blue eyes. Indeed, I believe I shall turn monopolizer in my dotage, and keep them all to myself. Julia is my child. Louisa has the merit with me (exclusive of her own superlative one) of being *her*

sister. And my little *Finch* is a worthy girl; I adore her for her friendship to my darling. Surely your heart must be impenetrable, if so much merit, and so much beauty, does not assert their sway over you.

Do you think that infamous fellow (I am sorry to express myself thus while speaking of a peer of our realm) Lord Biddulph is sincere in his reformation? Perhaps returning health may renew in him vices which are become habitual from long practice. If he reflects at all, he has much, very much, to answer for throughout this unhappy affair. Indeed, he did not spare himself in his conversation with me. If he sees his errors in time, he ought to be thankful to Heaven, for allowing that *time* to him, which, by his pernicious councils, he prevented the man he called *friend* from availing himself of. Adieu! my dear Sir George. May you never feel the want of *that peace which goodness bosoms ever!*

EDWARD STANLEY.

L E T.

LETTER L.

TO MISS FINCH.

YOU are very sly, my dear Maria. Mr. Stanley assures me, you went to Lady Barton's purposely to give her nephew, Sir George, the meeting. Is it so? and am I in danger of losing my friend? Or is it only the jocularly of my uncle on the occasion? Pray be communicative on this affair. I am sure I need not urge you on that head, as you have never used any reserve to me. A mind of such integrity as yours requires no disguises. What little I saw of Sir George Brudenel shews him to be a man worthy of my Maria. What an encomium I have paid him in one word! But, joking apart (for I do not believe, you entertained an idea of a *rencontre* with the young Baronet at Barton-house), Mr. Stanley says, with the utmost seriousness,

riousness, that his friend Brudenel made him the *confidante* of a *penchant* for our sweet Maria, some time since, on his inviting him down hither, to pick up a wife *unhackneyed in the ways of the world*. However, don't be talked into a partiality for the swain, for none of us here have a wish to become match-makers.

And now I have done with the young man, permit me to add a word or two concerning the old one; I mean Mr. Stanley. He has, in the tenderest and most friendly manner, settled on me two thousand a year (the sum fixed on another occasion) while I continue the widow of his unfortunate nephew; and if hereafter I should be induced to enter into other engagements, I am to have fifteen thousand pounds at my own disposal. This, he says, justice prompts him to do; but adds, "I will not tell you how far my affection would carry me, because the world would perhaps call me an *old fool*."

He leaves us next week, to make some preparation there for our reception in a
short

short time. I am to be mistress of his house ; and he has made a bargain with my father, that I shall spend half the year with him, either at Stanley-Park or Pemberton-Lodge. You may believe all the happiness of my future life is centred in the hope of contributing to the comfort of my father, and this my second parent. My views are very circumscribed ; however, I am more calm than I expected to have been, considering how much I have been tossed about in the stormy ocean. It is no wonder that I am sometimes under the deepest dejection of spirits, when I sit, as I often do, and reflect on past events. But I am convinced I ought not to enquire too minutely into some fatal circumstances. May the poor deluded victim meet with mercy ! I draw a veil over his frailties. Ah ! what errors are they which death cannot cancel ? Who shall say, *I will walk upright, my foot shall not slide or go astray* ? Who knows how long he shall be upheld by the powerful hand of God ? The most presumptuous of us, if

left

left to ourselves, may be guilty of a lapse. Oh! may *my* trespasses be forgiven, as I forgive and forget *his*!

My dear Maria will excuse my proceeding; the last apostrophe will convince you of the impossibility of my continuing to use my pen.

Adieu!

JULIA STANLEY.

[The correspondence, for obvious reasons, is discontinued for some months. During the interval it appears, that an union had taken place between Sir George Brudenel and Miss Finch.—While Lady Stanley was on her accustomed visit to her uncle, she receives the following letter from Miss Grenville.]

L E T.

LETTER LI.

To Lady STANLEY.

Melford-abbey.

THIS last week has been so much taken up, that I could not find one day to tell my beloved Julia that *she* has not been *one day* out of my thoughts, tho' you have heard from me but once since I obeyed the summons of our friend Jenny Melford, to be witness of her renunciation of that name. We are a large party here, and very brilliant.

I think I never was accounted vain; but, I assure you, I am almost induced to be so, from the attention of a very agreeable man, who is an intimate acquaintance of Mr. Wynne's; a man of fortune, and, what will have more weight with me, a man of strict principles. He has already made himself some little interest in my heart, by some very benevolent actions, which we have by accident

accident discovered. I don't know what will come of it, but, if he should be importunate, I doubt I should not have power to refuse him. My father is prodigiously taken with him; yet men are such deceitful mortals—well, time will shew—in the mean time, adieu!

Yours most sincerely,

LOUISA GRENVILLE.

LETTER LII.

To Lady STANLEY.

I CANNOT resist writing to you, in consequence of a piece of intelligence I received this morning from Mr. Spencer, the hero of my last letter.

At

At breakfast Mr. Spencer said to Mr. Wynne—" You will have an addition
" to your party to-morrow; I have just
" had a letter from my friend Harry
" Woodley, informing me, that he will
" pay his *devoir* to you and your fair
" bride before his journey to London."

The name instantly struck me—
" Harry Woodley!" I repeated.

" Why do you know Harry Wood-
" ley?" asked Mr. Spencer. " I once
" knew a gentleman of that name," I
" answered, " whose father owned that
" estate my father now possesses. I re-
" member him a boy, when he was under
" the tuition of Mr. Jones, a worthy
" clergyman in our neighbourhood."
" The very same," replied Mr. Spencer.
" Harry is my most particular friend; I
" have long known him, and as long
" loved him with the tendèrest affection—
" an affection," whispered he, " which
" reigned unrivaled till I saw you; he
" was the *first*, but now is *second* in my
" heart." I blushed, but felt no anger
at his boldness.

I shall

I shall not finish my letter till I have seen my old acquaintance ; I wish for to-morrow ; I expressed my impatience to Mr. Spencer. " I should be uneasy at your earnestness," said he, " did I not know that curiosity is incident to your sex ; but I will let you into a secret : " Harry's heart is engaged, and has long been so ; therefore, throw not away your fire upon him, but preserve it, to cherish one who lives but in your smiles."

He is arrived (Mr. Woodley, I mean) ; we are all charmed with him. I knew him instantly, tho' the beautiful boy is now flushed with manliness. It is five years since we saw him last—he did not meet us without the utmost emotion, which we attributed to the recollection that we now owned those lands which ought in right to have been his. He has, however, by Mr. Spencer's account, been very successful in life, and is master
of

of a plentiful fortune. He seems to merit the favour of all the world.

Adieu!

Yours most truly,

LOUISA GRENVILLE.

LETTER LIII.

To Lady STANLEY.

Melford-abbey.

MR. Spencer tells me, it is a proof I have great ascendancy over him, since he has made me the *confidante* of his friend Woodley's attachment. And who do you think is the object of it? To whom has the constant youth paid his vows in secret, and worn away a series of years in hopeless, pining love? Ah! my Julia, who can inspire so tender, so lasting, a flame as yourself? Yes! you

you are the saint before whose shrine the faithful Woodley has bent his knee, and sworn eternal truth.

You must remember the many instances of esteem we have repeatedly received from him. To me it was friendship; to my sister it was love—and *love* of the purest, noblest kind.

He left Woodley-vale, you recollect, about five years ago. He left all he held dear; all the soft hope which cherished life, in the flattering idea of raising himself, by some fortunate stroke, to such an eminence, that he might boldly declare how much, how fondly, he adored his Julia. In the first instance, he was not mistaken—he has acquired a noble fortune. Flushed with hope and eager expectation, he flew to Woodley-vale, and the first sound that met his ear was—that the object of his tenderest wishes was, a few weeks before his arrival, married. My Julia! will not your tender sympathizing heart feel, in some degree, the cruel anxiety that must take place in the bosom which had been, during

ing a long journey, indulging itself in the fond hope of being happy—and just at that point of time, and at that place, where the happiness was to commence, to be dashed at once from the scene of bliss, with the account of his beloved's being married to another? What then remained for the ill-fated youth, but to fly from those scenes where he had sustained so keen a disappointment; and, without casting one glance on the plains the extravagance of his father had wrested from him, seek in the bosom of his friends an asylum?

He determined not to return till he was able to support the sight of such interesting objects with composure. He proposed leaving England: he travelled; but never one moment, in idea, wandered from the spot which contained all his soul held dear. Some months since, he became acquainted with the event which has once more left you free. His delicacy would not allow him to appear before you till the year was near expired. And now, if such unexampled constancy

constancy may plead for him, what competitor need Harry Woodley fear?

I told you my father was much pleased with Mr. Spencer, but he is more than pleased with his old acquaintance. You cannot imagine how much he interests himself in the hope that his invariable attachment to you may meet its due reward, by making, as he says, a proper impression on your heart. He will return with us to Woodley-vale. My father's partiality is so great, that, I believe, should you be inclined to favour the faithful Harry, he will be induced to make you the eldest, and settle Woodley on you, that it may be transmitted to Harry's heirs; a step, which, I give you my honour, I shall have no objection to. Besides, it will be proving the sincerity of Mr. Spencer's attachment to me—a proof I should not be averse to making; for, you know, *a burnt child dreads the fire.*

These young men take up all our attention; but I will not write a word more till I have enquired after my dear old one.

one. How does the worthy soul do? I doubt you have not sung to him lately, as the gout has returned with so much violence. You know, he said, your voice banished all pain. Pray continue singing, or any thing which indicates returning chearfulness; a blessing I so much wish you. I have had a letter from Lady Brudenel; she calls on me for my promised visit, but I begin to suspect I shall have engagements enough on my hands bye and bye. I doubt my father is tired of us both, as he is planning a scheme to get rid of us at once. But does not this seeming eagerness proceed from that motive which guides all his actions towards us—his extreme tenderness—the apprehension of leaving us unconnected, and the infirmities of life hastening with large strides on himself? Oh! my Julia! he is the best of fathers!

Adieu! I am dressed *en cavalier*, and just going to mount my horse, accompanied by my two beaux. I wish you was here, as I own I should have no objection to a *tête-à-tête* with Spencer; nor would

Hurry with you. But *here*—he is in the way.

Yours,

L. GRENVILLE.

LETTER LIV.

To Miss GRENVILLE.

Stanley-park.

ALAS! my dearest Louisa, is it to me your last letter was addressed? to me, the sad victim of a fatal attachment? Torn as has been my heart by the strange vicissitudes of life, am I an object fit to admit the bright ray of joy? Unhappy Woodley, if thy destiny is to be decided by my voice! It is—it must be ever against thee. Talk not to me, Louisa, of love—of joy and happiness! Ever, ever, will they be strangers to my care-worn breast. A little calm (oh!

how

how deceitful !) had taken possession of my mind, and seemed to chase away the dull melancholy which habitual griefs had planted there. Ah ! seek not to rob me of the small share allotted me. Speak not—write not of Woodley ; my future peace depends upon it. The name of *love* has awakened a thousand, thousand pangs, which sorrow bad hushed to rest ; at least, I kept them to myself. I look on the evils of my life as a punishment for having too freely indulged myself in a most reprehensible attachment. Never has my hand traced the fatal name ! Never have I sighed it forth in the most retired privacy ! Never then, my Louisa, oh ! never mention the destructive passion to me more !

I remember the ill-fated youth—ill-fated, indeed, if cursed with so much constancy ! The first predilection I felt in favour of one too dear—was a faint similitude I thought I discovered between him and Woodley. But if I entertained a partiality at first for him, because he reminded me of a former companion, too

soon he made such an interest in my bosom, as left him superior there to all others. It is your fault, Louisa, that I have adverted to this painful, this forbidden subject. Why have you mentioned the pernicious theme?

Why should my father be so earnest to have me again enter into the pale of matrimony? If your prospects are flattering—indulge them, and be happy. I have tasted of the fruit—have found it bitter to the palate, and corroding to the heart. Urge me not then to run any more hazards; I have suffered sufficiently. Do not, in pity to Mr. Woodley, encourage in him a hope, that perseverance may subdue my resolves. Fate is not more inexorable. I should despise myself if I was capable, for one moment, of wishing to give pain to any mortal. He cannot complain of me—he may of *Destiny*; and, oh! what complaints have I not to make of *her*!

I have

* * * * *

I have again perused your letter; I am not free, Louisa, even if my heart was not devoted to the unfortunate exile. Have I not sworn to my attendant Sylph? He, who preserved me in the day of trial? My vows are registered in heaven! I will not recede from them! I believe he knows my heart, with all its weaknesses. Oh! my Louisa, do not distress me more.

Adieu!

JULIA STANLEY.

LETTER. LV.

To Lady STANLEY.

WHERE has my Julia learnt this inflexibility of mind? or what virtue so rigid as to say, she is not free to enter into other engagements? Are your affections to lie for ever buried in the grave of your unfortunate husband? Heaven, who has given us renewable affections, will not condemn us for making a transfer of them, when the continuance of that affection can be of no farther advantage to the object. But your case is different; you have attached yourself to a visionary idea! the man, whose memory you cherish, perhaps, thinks no longer of you; or would he not have sought you out before this? Are you to pass your life in mourning his absence, and not endeavour to do justice to the fidelity of one of the most amiable of men?

• Surely,

Surely, my Julia, these sacrifices are not required of you! You condemn my father for being so interested in the fate of his friend Woodley!—he only requests you to see him. Why not see him as an acquaintance? You cannot form the idea of my father's wishing to constrain you to accept him! All he thinks of at present is, that you would not suffer prejudices to blind your reason. Woodley seeks not to subdue you by perseverance; only give him leave to try to please you; only allow him to pay you a visit. Surely, if you are as fixed as fate, you cannot apprehend the bare sight of him will overturn your resolves! You fear more danger than there really is. Still we say—*see him*. My dearest Julia did not use to be inexorable! My father allows he has now no power over you, even if he could form the idea of using it. What, then have you to dread? Surely you have a negative voice!

* * * *

I am called upon—but will end with the strain I began. See him, and then refuse him your esteem, nay more, your tender affection, if you can.

Adieu !

Yours most sincerely,

LOUISA GRENVILLE.

LETTER LVI.

To Miss GRENVILLE.

OH, my Louisa! how is the style of your letters altered! Is this change (not improvement) owing to your attachment to Mr. Spencer? Can *love* have wrought this difference? If it has, may it be a stranger to my bosom!—for it has ceased to make my Louisa amiable!—She, who

who was once all tenderness—all softness!
 who fondly soothed my distresses, *and*
felt for weakness which she never knew—

“ It is not friendly, 'tis not maidenly ;

“ Our *sex*, as well as I, may chide you for it,

“ Though I alone do feel the injury—”

you, to whom I have freely exposed
 all the failings of my wayward heart !
 in whose bosom I have reposed all its
 tumultuous beatings!---all its anxieties!—
 Oh, Louisa! can you forget my *confidence*
 in you, which would not permit me to
 conceal even my errors? Why do you
 then join with men in scorning your
 friend? You say, *my father has now no*
power over me, even if he could form the
idea of using power. Alas! you have all
 too much power over me! you have the
 power of rendering me for ever misera-
 ble, either by your persuasions to con-
 sign myself to eternal wretchedness; or
 by my *inexorableness*, as you call it, in
 flying in the face of persons so dear
 to me!

How cruel it is in you to arraign the conduct of one to whose character you are a *stranger*! What has the man, who, unfortunately both for himself and me, has been too much in my thoughts; what has he done, that you should so decisively pronounce him to be inconstant, and forgetful of those who seemed so dear to him? Why is the delicacy of *your favourite* to be so much commended for his forbearance till the year of mourning was near expired? And what proof that another may not be actuated by the same delicate motive?

But I will have done with these painful interrogatories; they only help to wound my bosom, even more than you have done.

My good uncle is better; you have wrung my heart--and, harsh and unbecoming as it may seem in your eyes, I will not return to Woodley-vale, till I am assured I shall not receive any more persecutions on his account. Would he be content with my esteem, he may easily

entitle

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entitle himself to it by his still further
forbearance.

My resolution is fixed—no matter
what that is—there is no danger of
making any one a participator of my
sorrows.

Adieu!

JULIA STANLEY.

LETTER LVII.

To Miss GRENVILLE.

Stanley park.

LOUISA! why was this scheme
laid? I cannot compose my
thoughts even to ask you the most
simple question! Can you judge of my
astonishment? the emotions with which
I was seized? Oh! no, you cannot—you
cannot, because you was never sunk so

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low in the depths of affliction as I have been; you never have experienced the extreme of joy and despair as I have done. Oh! you know nothing of what I feel!--of what I cannot find words to express! Why don't you come hither?--- I doubt whether I shall retain my senses till your arrival.

Adieu!

Yours for ever,

JULIA STANLEY.

LETTER LVIII.

To Lady BRUDENEL.

Stanley-park.

YES! my dear Maria, you shall be made acquainted with the extraordinary change in your friend! You had all the mournful particulars of my past life

life before you. I was convinced of your worth, nor could refuse you my confidence. But what is all this? I cannot spend my time, my precious time, in prefacing the scenes which now surround me.

You know how depressed my mind was with sorrow at the earnestness with which my father and sister espoused the cause of Mr. Woodley. I was ready to sink under the dejection their perseverance occasioned, aggravated too by my tender, long-cherished attachment to the unfortunate Baron. [This is the first time my pen has traced that word.]

I was sitting yesterday morning in an alcove in the garden, ruminating on the various scenes which I had experienced, and giving myself up to the most melancholy presages, when I perceived a paper fall at my feet. I apprehended it had dropped from my pocket in taking out my handkerchief, which a trickling tear had just before demanded. I stooped to pick it up; and, to my surprise, found

found it sealed and addressed to myself. I hastily broke it open, and my wonder increased when I read these words :

“ I have been witness to the perturbation of your mind. How will you atone to your Sylph, for not availing yourself of the privilege of making application to him in any emergency ? If you have lost your confidence in him, he is the most wretched of beings. He flatters himself he may be instrumental to your future felicity. If you are inclined to be indebted to him for any share of it, you may have the opportunity of seeing him in five minutes. Arm yourself with resolution, most lovely, most adored of women ; for he will appear under a semblance not expected by you. You will see in him the most faithful and constant of human beings.”

I was seized with such a trepidation, that I could hardly support myself ; but, summoning all the strength of mind I could assume, I said aloud, though in a tremulous voice, “ Let me view my amiable
Sylph !”

"Sylph!"—But oh! what became of me when at my feet I beheld the most wished-for, the most dreaded, *Tonhausen*! I clasped my hands together, and shrieked with a most frantic air, falling back half insensible on the seat.

"Curse on my precipitance!" he cried, throwing his arms round me. "My angel! my Julia! look on the most forlorn of his sex, unless you pity me." "Pity you!" I exclaimed, with a faint accent—"Oh! from whence, and how came you here?"

"Did not my Julia expect me?" he asked, in the softest voice, and sweetest manner.

"I expect you! How should I? alas!" "what intimation could I have of your arrival?"

"From this," he replied, taking up the billet written by the Sylph. "What do you mean? For Heaven's sake! rise, and unravel this mystery. My brain will burst with the torture of suspense."

"If the loveliest of women will pardon the stratagems I have practised on
her

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“her unsuspecting mind, I will rise, and
 “rise the happiest of mortals. Yes,
 “my beloved Julia, I am that invisible
 “guide, that has so often led you
 “through the wilds of life. I am that
 “blissful being, whom you supposed
 “something supernatural.”

“It is impossible,” I cried, interrupting him, “it cannot be!”

“Will not my Julia recollect this poor
 “pledge of her former confidence?”
 drawing from a ribband a locket of hair
 I had once sent to the Sylph. “Is this,
 “to me inestimable, gift no longer ac-
 “knowledged by you? this dear part
 “of yourself, whose enchantment gave
 “to my wounded soul all the nourish-
 “ment she drew, which supported me
 “when exiled from all that the world
 “had worth living for? Have you
 “forgot the vows of lasting fidelity,
 “with which the value of the present
 “was enhanced? Oh! sure you do not.
 “And yet you are silent. May I not
 “have one word, one look?”

“Alas!” cried I, hiding my face
 from his glances; “what can I say?”
 “What

"What can I do? Oh! too well I remember all. The consciousness, that every secret of my heart has been laid bare to your inspection, covers me with the deepest confusion."

"Bear witness for me," cried he, "that I never made an ill use of that knowledge. Have I ever presumed upon it? Could you ever discover, by the arrogance of Ton-hausen's conduct, that he had been the happy *confidant* of your retired sentiments? Believe me, Lady Stanley, that man will ever admire you most, who knows most your worth; and oh! who knows it more, who adores it more than I?"

"Still," said I, "I cannot compose my scattered senses. All appears a dream; but, trust me, I doat on the illusion. I would not be undeceived, if I am in an error. I would fain persuade myself, that but one man on earth is acquainted with the softness, I will not call it weakness, of my soul; and he the only man who could inspire that softness." "Oh! be persuaded,"

"suaded, most angelic of women,"
 said he, pressing my hand to his lips,
 "be persuaded of the truth of my as-
 "sertion, that the Sylph and I are one."

"You know how you were circum-
 "stanced."

"Yes! I was married before I had
 "the happiness of being seen by you."

"No; you was not."

"Not married, before I was seen by
 "you?"

"Most surely not. Years, years be-
 "fore that event, I knew, and, knowing,
 "loved you—loved you with all the
 "fondness of man, while my age was
 "that of a boy. Has Julia quite forgot
 "her juvenile companions? Is the time
 "worn from her memory, when Harry
 "Woodley used to weave the fancied
 "garland for her?"

"Protect me, Heaven!" cried I, "sure
 "I am in the land of shadows!"

"No," cried he, clasping me in his
 arms, and smiling at my apostrophe,
 "you shall find substance and substantial
 "joys too here."

"Thou

"Thou Proteus!" said I, withdrawing myself from his embrace, "what do you mean by thus shifting characters, and each so potent?"

"To gain my charming Nymph," he answered. "But why should we thus waste our time? Let me lead you to your father."

"My father! Is my father here?"

"Yes, he brought me hither; perhaps, as Woodley, an unwelcome visitant. But will you have the cruelty to reject him?" added he, looking slyly.

"Don't presume too much," I returned with a smile. "You have convinced me, you are capable of great artifice; but I shall insist on your explaining your whole plan of operations, as an atonement for your double, nay treble dealing, for I think you are three, in one. But I am impatient to behold my father, whom, the moment before I saw you, I was accusing of cruelty, in seeking to urge me in the favour of one I was determined never to see."

"But

"But now you have seen him (it was
 "all your sister required of you, you
 "know), will you be inexorable to his
 "vows?"

"I am determined to be guided by
 "my Sylph," cried I, "in this momen-
 "tous instance. That was my resolu-
 "tion, and still shall remain the same."

"Suppose thy Sylph had recom-
 "mended you to bestow your hand on
 "Woodley? What would have be-
 "come of poor *Ton-hausen*?"

"My confidence in the Sylph was es-
 "tablished on the conviction of his being
 "my safest guide; as such, he would
 "never have urged me to bestow my
 "hand where my heart was refractory;
 "but, admitting the possibility of the
 "Sylph's pursuing such a measure, a
 "negative voice would have been al-
 "lowed me; and no power, human or
 "divine, should have constrained that
 "voice to breathe out a vow of fidelity
 "to any other than him to whom the
 "secrets of my heart have been so long
 "known."

By

By this time we had nearly reached the house, from whence my father sprung with the utmost alacrity to meet me. As he pressed me to his venerable bosom, "Can my Julia refuse the request of her father, to receive, as the best pledge of his affection, this valuable present? And will she forgive the innocent trial we made of her fidelity to the most amiable of men?"

"Ah! I know not what to say," cried I; "here has been sad management amongst you. But I shall soon forget the heart-achs I have experienced, if they have removed from this gentleman any suspicions that I did not regard him for himself alone. He has, I think, adopted the character of Prior's Henry; and I hope he is convinced that the faithful Emma is not a fiction of the poet's brain. I know not, I continued, by what name to call him."

"Call me *yours*," cried he, "and that will be the highest title I shall ever aspire to. But you shall know
" all,

"all, as indeed you have a right to do.
 "Your sister, and soon, I hope, mine,
 "related to you the attachment which
 "I had formed for you in my tenderest
 "years, which, like the incision on
 "the infant bark, *grew with my growth,*
 "*and strengthened with my strength.* She
 "likewise told you (but oh! how faint,
 "how inadequate to my feelings!) the
 "extreme anguish that seized me when
 "I found you was married. Distraction
 "surrounded me; I cannot give words
 "to my grief and despair. I fled from
 "a place which had lost its only attrac-
 "tive power. In the first paroxysm of
 "affliction, I knew not what resolutions
 "I formed. I wrote to Spencer—not to
 "give rest or ease to my over-burdened
 "heart; for that, alas! could receive
 "no diminution nor to complain, for
 "surely I could not complain of you,
 "My form was not imprinted on your
 "mind, though yours had worn itself
 "so deep a trace in mine. Spencer op-
 "posed my resolution of returning to
 "Germany, where I had formed some
 "connexions

" connexions (only friendly ones, my
 " Julia, but, as such, infinitely tender).
 " *He* it was that urged me to take the
 " name of Ton-hausen, as that title be-
 " longed to an estate which devolved to
 " me from the death of one of the most
 " valuable men in the world, who had
 " sunk into his grave, as the only asylum
 " from a combination of woes. As
 " some years had elapsed, in which I
 " had increased in bulk and stature,
 " joined to my having had the small-
 " pox since I had been seen by you, he
 " thought it more than probable you
 " would not recollect my person. I
 " hardly know what I proposed to my-
 " self, from closing with him in this
 " scheme, only that I take Heaven to
 " witness, I never meant to injure you;
 " and I hope the whole tenor of my
 " conduct has convinced you how sin-
 " cere I was in that profession. From
 " the great irregularity of your late
 " husband's life, I had a *presentiment*,
 " that you would at one time or other
 " be free from your engagements. I
 " revered you as one, to whom I hoped
 " to

"to be united; if not in this world, I
 "might be a kindred angel with you in
 "the next. Your virtuous soul could not
 "find its congenial friend in the riot and
 "confusion in which you lived. I dared
 "not trust myself to offer to become
 "your guide. I knew the extreme
 "hazard I should run; and that, with
 "all the innocent intentions in the
 "world, we might both be undone by
 "our *passions* before *reason* could come
 "to our assistance. I soon saw I had
 "the happiness to be distinguished by
 "you! and that distinction, while it
 "raised my admiration of you, excited
 "in me the desire of rendering myself
 "still more worthy of your esteem; but
 "even that esteem I refused myself
 "the dear privilege of soliciting for. I
 "acted with the utmost caution; and
 "if, under the character of the Sylph,
 "I dived into the recesses of your soul,
 "and drew from thence the secret at-
 "tachment you professed for the happy
 "Baron, it was not so much to gratify
 "the vanity of my heart, as to put you
 "on

" on your guard, lest some of the invi-
 " dious wretches about you should
 " propagate any reports to your pre-
 " judice; and, dear as the sacrifice
 " cost me, I tore myself from your loved
 " presence on a sarcasm which Lady
 " Anne Parker threw out concerning
 " us. I withdrew some miles from
 " London, and left Spencer there to
 " apprise me of any change in your
 " circumstances. I gave you to under-
 " stand I had quitted the kingdom; but
 " that was a severity I could not impose
 " upon myself: however, I constrained
 " myself to take a resolution of never
 " again appearing in your presence till
 " I should have the liberty of indulging
 " my passion without restraint. Nine
 " parts of ten in the world may con-
 " demn my procedure as altogether
 " romantic. I believe few will find it
 " imitable; but I have nice feelings,
 " and I could act no other than I did.
 " I could not, you see, bear to be the
 " rival of myself. *That* I have proved
 " under both the characters I assumed;

"and had I found you had forgotten
 "Ton-hausen, Woodley would have
 "been deprived of one of the most de-
 "licate pleasures a refined taste can ex-
 "perience. And now all that remains
 "is to intreat the forgiveness of my
 "amiable Julia, for these *pious frauds*;
 "and to reassure her she shall, if *the*
 "*heart of man is not deceitful above all*
 "*things*, never repent the confidence she
 "placed in her faithful Sylph, the affec-
 "tion she honoured the happy Ton-
 "hausen with, nor the esteem, notwith-
 "standing his obstinate perseverance,
 "which she charitably bestowed on that
 "unfortunate knight-errant, Harry
 "Woodley."

"Heaven send I never may!" said I.
 But really I shall be half afraid to ven-
 ture the remainder of my life with
 such a variable being. However,
 my father undertakes to answer for him
 in future.

I assure you, my dear Maria, you are
 much indebted to me for this recital, for
 I have borrowed the time out of the
 night,

night, as the whole day has been taken up in a manner you may more easily guess than I can describe.

Say every thing that is civil to Sir George on my part, as you are conscious I have no time to bestow on any other men than those by whom I am surrounded. I expect my sister and her swain to-morrow.

Adieu !

I am yours ever,

JULIA STANLEY.

LETTER LIX.

To Lady BRUDENEL.

YOU would hardly know your old acquaintance again, he is so totally altered; you remember his pensive air, and gentle unassuming manner, which

seemed to bespeak the protection of every one. Instead of all this, he is so alert, so brisk, and has such a saucy assurance in his whole deportment, as really amazes; and, I freely own, delights me, as I am happily convinced, that it is owing to myself that he is thus different from what he was. Let him be what he will, he will ever be dear to me.

I wanted him to relate to me all the particulars of his friend Frederick, the late Baron's, misfortunes. He says, the recital would fill a volume, but that I shall peruse some papers on the subject some time or other, when we are tired of being chearful, but that now we have better employment; I therefore submit for the present.

I admire my sister's choice very much; he is an agreeable man, and extremely lively: much more so naturally, notwithstanding the airs some folks give themselves, than my Proteus. Louisa too is quite alive; Mr. Stanley has forgot the gout; and my father is ready to dance

dance at the wedding of his eldest daughter, which, I suppose, will take place soon.

Pray how do you go on? Are you near your *accouchement*? or dare you venture to travel as far as Stanley-park? for my uncle will not part with any of us yet.

Ah! I can write no longer; they threaten to snatch the pen from my hand; that I may prevent such a solecism in politeness, I will conclude, by assuring you of my tenderest wishes.

Adieu!

JULIA STANLEY.

LETTER LX.

To Lady STANLEY.

UPON my word, a pretty kind of a romantic adventure you have made of it, and the conclusion of the business just as it should be, and quite in the line of *poetical justice*. Virtue triumphant, and Vice dragged at her chariot-wheels:—for I heard yesterday, that Lord Biddulph was selling off all his moveables, and had moved himself out of the kingdom. Now my old friend Montague should be sent on board the *Justitia*, and *all's well that ends well*. As to your Proteus, with all his *aliases*, I think he must be quite a Machiavel in artifice. Heaven send he may never change again! I should be half afraid of such a Will-of-the-wisp lover. First this, then that, now the other, and always

ways the same. But bind him, bind him, Julia, in adamantine chains ; make sure of him, while he is yet in your power ; and follow, with all convenient speed, the dance your sister is going to lead off. Oh ! she is in a mighty hurry ! Let me hear what she will say when she has been married ten months, as poor I have been ! and here must be kept prisoner with all the dispositions in the world for freedom !

What an acquisition your two husbands will be ! I bespeak them both for god-fathers ; pray tell them so. Do you know, I wanted to persuade Sir George to take a trip, just to see how you proceed in this affair ; but, I blush to tell you, he would not hear of any such thing, because he is in expectation of a little impertinent visitor, and would not be from home for the world. *Tell it not in Gath.* Thank heaven, the dissolute tribe in London know nothing of it. But, I believe, none of our set will be anxious about their sentiments. While

200 THE SYLPH.

we feel ourselves happy, we shall think
it no sacrifice to give up all the nonsense
and hurry of the *beau monde*.

Adieu !

MARIA BRUDENEL.

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